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The quiet hour : the educational implications of its use and implementation in the American workplace.

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THE QUIET HOUR:

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF ITS USE AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE

A Dissertation Presented

By

LYNN KIRK

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> My God, My Adored One, My King, My Desire. What tongue can voice my thanks to Thee? I was heedless, Thou didst awaken me. I had turned back from Thee, Thou didst graciously aid me to turn toward Thee. I was as one dead, Thou didst quicken me with the water of life. I was withered Thou didst revive me with the heavenly stream of Thine utteance which hath flowed forth from the Pen of the All-Merciful.
>
> O Divine Providence. All existence is begotten by Thy bounty; deprive it not of the waters of Thy generosity, neither do Thou withhold it from the ocean of Thy mercy. I beseech Thee to aid and assist me at all times and under all conditions and seek from the heaven of Thy grace Thine ancient favor. Thou art, in truth, the Lord of bounty, and the Sovereign of the kingdom of eternity.
>
> -Baha'u'llah

ABSTRACT

The Quiet Hour:

The Educational Implications of Its Use and Implementation

in the American Workplace

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This study is an investigation into the use and implementation of the Quiet Hour, a Time Management strategy whereby all employees of an organization, or a smaller, specified work group, work without noise or interaction for one hour of the day. The Quiet Hour policy is intended as an antedote to the stress producing, counter productive busyness that has been documented in many American organizations.

This study evolved from a concern that Quiet Hour policies frequently fail to survive and from an assessment of the literature which suggested that the professional understanding of how a Quiet Hour worked needed deepening. This study subsequently sought information relative to Quiet Hour use and implementation from employees in six organizations where a Quiet Hour is currently (or once was) practiced.

This study discovered three specific areas of Quiet Hour use and implementation that bear significantly on the the policy's effectiveness and survival in the workplace. One area is the manager's three-faceted role which addresses specific management functions that are critical to Quiet Hour practice: overt support, exemplarary practice, and maintenance responsibility. Another area is concerned with attitudes and misconceptions that hamper Quiet Hour adoption. The third area is the suprising success of "pocket Quiet Hours" which are isolated groups of Quiet Hour practitioners who maintain the policy in the midst of co-workers who do not.

A Quiet Hour implementation framework is proposed. The framework emphasizes proper promotion and allows employees adequate time to adjust to the idea and new behaviors of the policy. Training is a critical component of the framework.

Further research is suggested in the areas of Quiet Hour use and the variations of the Quiet Hour policy that exist in different companies. The study also proposes a search for a more appropriate name than "Quiet Hour."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

C H A P T E R I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The current condition of the typical American workplace is one of frenzied activity. Employees complain that their time is fragmented and their attention is divided among various, often conflicting and simultaneously imposed, demands. The typical American workplace allows the employee little opportunity to give concentrated effort to one particular piece of work and offers no time to make daily plans for the eight hours' work ahead.

In response to such a problem, a number of organizations in the United States have instituted a Time Management policy called the Quiet Hour which allows employees the uninterrupted block of time that they need to think and plan. In principle, the Quiet Hour is a simple matter; in practice it has proved to be very different. Most organizations that try to institute a Quiet Hour, sooner or later, find it falling apart.

This research effort attempts to find out how Quiet Hour implementation happens. It asks what forces are at work that cause one Quiet Hour to thrive and another to falter and die. It ponders why such a seemingly good idea that addresses such an undisputedly problematic feature of the workplace suffers from such a high rate of mortality.

This first chapter starts at the beginning of one's understanding of the problem. It offers a full explanation of what the Quiet Hour is, how it addresses workplace frenzy, and how it fits into the Time Management training world. This first chapter also offers data from a preliminary study which helped to formulate the line of inquiry for the larger investigation that followed.

What is a Quiet Hour?

The Quiet Hour is a Time Management strategy, institutionalized in the workplace for the purpose of infusing the work process with thoughtfulness and promoting the practice of planning on a routine basis. It is organized so that an entire staff or better yet, an entire organization, agrees to cease communication and activity for approximately one hour of the day. In that block of time, unique in its contrast to the otherwise frenzied pace of the work day, people supposedly work alone, uninterupted at their desks. The intended activity for the hour is planning, but any other activity that requires concentration and makes good use of the time is sanctioned.

This Quiet Hour is much like the individual's practice of rising early in the morning or escaping to an empty office to avoid interruptions where the intent is to work more efficiently and with greater concentration in an atmosphere that is conducive

to focused attention. The significant difference, however, between the Quiet Hour of this discussion and the personal quiet time that productive people have always acclaimed, is in the much greater scope of the former. The institutionalized version, the Quiet Hour, asks that all individuals, regardless of rank or influence, take personal quiet time simultaneously while remaining physically in an environment that is quiet only because everyone has consented to make it that way.[1]

The Quiet Hour is literally an agreed-upon hour of quiet among the employees of any one staff or organization. In its most pure form, there is no inter- or intra-staff communication and no unnecessary movement or noise. (No duplicating machines, for example, should be operated.) All incoming calls and visitors are deflected by one secretary-type person (or a pool of people who rotate the responsibility) who takes messages and explains the unavailability of the personnel.

Although any hour of the day can be designated the Quiet Hour, it is suggested that the Quiet Hour be the first hour of the work day. Several reasons are offered for this choice. One reason is that the early hour of quiet and thoughtfulness, which replaces the more seductive habit of morning chit-chat and coffee, helps to establish a pace and attitude of productivity

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[1] The Quiet Hour as an institutional policy will be referred to with an upper case "Q" and "H" throughout this paper. The hour of quiet, which individuals take independently of one another, will be referred to with small case "q" and "h."

for the remainder of the day. "As the first hour of the day goes, so goes the day," reads a proverb that Alec Mackenzie quotes in Time Management training materials.

A second reason is that the first hour is a good time to plan the day; daily planning is a highly recommended activity for the hour of quiet. Thirdly, it is likely that fewer phone calls and visitors would attempt to enter the organization during the early morning.

Companies that have chosen to institute a second Quiet Hour have often selected the hour just after lunch. It has also been the case that the last hour of the day is chosen for the quiet hour; personnel can wrap up the day's work and get ready for tomorrow.

The Quiet Hour as an Antedote

The Quiet Hour was designed to counteract the currently prevalent frenzy of the American workplace that sometimes undermines personal effectiveness and organizational productivity. Researchers and trainers alike are beginning to name and document the fact that far too many employees go about their work in a manner that is laden with ineffective procedures. George Odiorne identified one and called it "the activity trap"

phenomenon.[2] There are others. Drucker (1967), Mackenzie (1979), LeBoeuf (1979), Douglass and Douglass (1980) and others note employees' difficulty in distinguishing between efficiency and effectiveness. Webber (1980), Trickett (1962) and others note the difficulty that employees have differentiating between a situation that is urgent and one that is important. Sune Carlson (1979) was so amazed at his executives' propensity for doing a task in an admittedly less efficient manner that he labeled the problem "administrative pathology." The American workplace has been dubbed a "Busyness Culture," [3] which suffers from too much doing and not enough thinking.

The Quiet Hour was designed to help counteract those inefficiencies. In the promotion of thoughtfulness, planning and methodical work procedures, the Quiet Hour encourages individuals to work more effectively; in its structure that mandates agreed-upon quiet and mutual cooperation, it provides the time and the environment in which to do just that.

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[2] Odiorne coined the phrase in his book Management and the Activity Trap, 1974. The term refers to the phenomenon of becoming so engrossed in an activity that one loses sight of the purpose. The activity trap concept is also used by Januz and Jones (1981) and Douglass and Douglass (1980).

[3] Ashkens and Schaffer coined the term; the concept is supported by Webber (1980), Patten (1981) and others.

The Quiet Hour as a Time Management Strategy

The Quiet Hour finds its place in the Time Management training world as a tool for personal effectiveness. It provides discipline (of self and others) for those who would struggle to take the quiet time individually.[4] In its promotion of planning, concentrated effort and thoughtfulness, it has the capacity to save an abundance of now and future time. The published Time Management experts support the Quiet Hour without exception. Among the major publications on Time Management, all but one dedicate a sizeable amount of attention to proclaiming its virtues and instructing its implementation.[5] "If you do not schedule yourself at least one Quiet Hour each day, you are overlooking one of your best opportunities to get your work under control," (Januz and Jones, 1981) is a representative comment.

The advocacy is strong. Yet the absence of empirical data which would describe what happens when a Quiet Hour is actually implemented and the lack of a theoretical framework which would enable one to regulate the implementation process become glaring

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[4] Moskowitz, 1981; Douglass and Douglass, 1980; and Ashkenas and Schaffer, 1982 make the point. The later two sources, in fact, urge the manager to institute the Quiet Hour among her/his staff so that her/his own quiet time is assured.

[5] Bliss is the one, although he does support Drucker's position on the necessity of consolidating chunks of discretionary time for extended effort.

omissions. Among the approximately 15 journal articles and 18 books collected by this researcher that advocated use of the Quiet Hour, only one builds its thoughts on empirical evidence and offers any guidelines on a conceptual level. Nowhere else among the literature is there data to support the appropriateness of the suggested implementation process, much less the efficacy and desirability of the Quiet Hour.

It would be impossible to have read carefully the Quiet Hour literature and not suspected that the how-to instructions and common sense "theory" had gone unchecked. For example, the potential user-organization is frequently instructed to have the manager of each staff- learn all about the Quiet Hour, train the secretary (who, it is presumed, already has exemplary assertiveness skills), train the staff in goal setting and planning skills, and prior to official implementation, conduct a trial-run Quiet Hour with subsequent assessment and revision. One would have to be naive to assume that those training skills exist in enough managers to make such a proposition feasible. (This discussion occurs in greater depth in Chapter III.)

Furthermore, it would be highly unlikely that the scant set of simplistic instructions -- usually a list of five -- offered to would-be users was enough for an organization's successful adoption. Given features of the typical American workplace with organizational norms of busyness, the propensity for socialization, and the inculturated aversion to planning, it

seems highly unlikely that a few rules and regulations, for all that they make good sense, would adequately guide a staff or organization through the maze of overactivity and undisciplined behavior to the practice of a routine Quiet Hour.

The how-to instructions and common sense "theory" upon which the literature builds its implementation model is frightfully thin; the lack of a dependably deep understanding is grievous.

The Preliminary Study

The absence of empirical data and the lack of meaningful theory prompted a preliminary study for purposes of ascertaining the extent to which the Quiet Hour was being successfully implemented in American workplaces.

The names of five organizations that were identified as Quiet Hour users in the literature were contacted by phone. In organizations where the name of a particular employee had been mentioned in the literature, that person was sought out. In organizations where no name was known, the Personnel Director was requested. Seldom did this researcher get to the sought-for employee, but always did this researcher find an informed employee who was willing to talk. On one occasion, the company president, who had instituted and subsequently ended his organization's Quiet Hour, subjected himself to the questioning.

Interviews were conducted in an informal manner and questions were general in nature. Employees were asked if they had a Quiet Hour in their organization, how it worked, how employees seem to use it, and why, in their opinion, did it succeed or fail.

The investigation revealed that only one organization of the six was using the Quiet Hour at that time. Of the remaining five, one could not remember having ever tried it, one could never get it going, two used it successfully for a time, (but it lasted only as long as the manager who instituted it remained in control), and one organization used it successfully for six years, after which the staff voted it out.

The phone interviews yielded a mixed response. There could be no conclusions drawn about success or failure from the respondents' comments, but several tendencies did become apparent. Some phone interviewees expressed their pleasure with the Quiet Hour and were very sorry that it was no longer in operation in their company. They had clear ideas about why it had not stayed alive and were willing to discuss the situation. In two cases the interviewees identified a change in management as the primary factor in their Quiet Hour's demise. At one organization the interviewee said that their Quiet Hour was no longer in effect partly because the man who had instituted it was gone. At another, the interviewee was adamant; the manager who had started the Quiet Hour had been promoted upward. Had he

stayed, said the interviewee who had been on his staff, so might have the Quiet Hour.

Further support for the same idea came from the comments of the two interviewees at yet another company. A secretary in the Personnel Office, when asked why their Quiet Hour had been so successful so long, explained without hesitation that one reason had to do with the consistent leadership; she said that many of the current top executives were managers who had been there when the Quiet Hour began 25 years ago. A subsequent conversation with the Director of Personnel at that company revealed compatible information. "Management is promoted from within the company," she said, "so that positions at the top are occupied by people who have already developed the habit of the Quiet Hour."

Interviewees easily identified particular problems. "Ours was too rigid," said the interviewee at one organization. "People [employees] don't like it when they think a customer can't get into them." "You have to stay on it," said the president of another company. "It gets sloppy," he said, and talked about the effort that monitoring it requires.

Sales people, it was suggested, create a circumstance that the Quiet Hour policy, as currently conceived, did not accommodate. Three interviewees indicated that some of the worst problems came from the sales force who would not forego conversations with their superiors or other sales people the first hour of the day as they prepared to go into the field.

Three interviewees indicated that some staff -- especially managers -- have difficulty adopting the habit of the Quiet Hour. One Personnel Director in an organization that was using the policy at that time, talked about how new employees sometimes disliked at the idea. Two other respondents talked about how some employees were outright resistant to it. "Some managers just don't like to be told what to do," said one interviewee. "They like to think they have things under control."

One Outstanding Company

What could not be ignored in this preliminary study was the unique situation of one organization that had successfully maintained a Quiet Hour for 25 years. Among a group in which none could keep the Quiet Hour longer than six years, the experience of this company stood out.

Repeated conversations with the Personnel Director and one staff employee revealed additional interesting pieces of data. For one, this company's version of the Quiet Hour was not exactly the one in the books. They allowed, for example, in-coming calls, although they chose the first hour of the day because fewer were likely to occur. Secondly, the Quiet Hour was perceived as a "helpful" policy by employees. According to the interviewee, people in this company were appreciative of the opportunity to plan their day's work.

It was hoped that even more could be learned from these apparently seasoned Quiet Hour users and a request was made for a much more thorough investigation. (This company is Organization E in the sample. See Appendixes A and B for more detailed information.) Though deliberation between this researcher and the company was conducted for several months, the company finally denied further access.

Summary

The Quiet Hour makes sense as an antedote to the problem of workplace frenzy. It is a simple idea that, when practiced effectively, wins the praise of those who put it to good use. The prevalence of its failure as an institutional policy, however, is currently a concern and very much a puzzle. Little is known about how and why one Quiet Hour works and another does not.

The preliminary study conducted in the summer of 1984 indicated that much can be learned about the Quiet Hour from the employees who have used it. Those who have lived with the Quiet Hour routine for a period of time and have seen their colleagues do the same, know something of value about how it all works. This study has capitalized on that knowledge by interviewing employees who have worked in organizations that use, or once used, a Quiet Hour, as well as some others in the professional

field of Time Management who have opinions and information about Quiet Hours in organizations. This endeavor has provided some answers to a question about how a simple, sensible idea might get implemented in the typical American workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to supply the Quiet Hour with insights and relevant empirical data in the hope of reducing the arbitrary nature of Quiet Hour implementation as it currently exists in the literature and in the field. This study hopes to deepen the professional understanding of the Quiet Hour and move it one step closer toward the creation of a more systematic and thorough Quiet Hour implementation model and a framework for Quiet Hour diagnosis and intervention.

It is expected that organizations who believe in the benefits that a Quiet Hour offers will find the deeper understanding of Quiet Hour implementation helpful. It is hoped that with a better understanding of how a Quiet Hour works, with clearer guidelines about what has to happen in order to institute one, Quiet Hour implementation will more often be a story of success.

C H A P T E R II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This literature review is divided into two parts. The first part of the review attempts to document the very busy, highly interactive, overly impulsive, fractionated nature of the workplace. It does this by extracting relevant findings from twelve different studies. Nine of these are studies which have tracked the time use of management level employees as they went about their work day. One study is based on lists of time wasters submitted by managers and the subsequent interviews that that researcher conducted with those same managers. Another study offers data from a poll of managers; that study attempted to ascertain the degree to which 10 basic Time Management principles were being put into practice. The twelfth study is an Amercian Management Association (AMA) Survey report of 1,369 organizational managers who self-identified aspects of their time use. The 12 studies are presented in a listing with their relevant findings; the listing is followed by a summation of those findings and some comments on the way in which the findings bear on the nature of this research project.

The second part of this literature review addresses the literature's treatment of the Quiet Hour; this part is a

presentation of what the Time Management experts say about the Quiet Hour's implementation process and what benefits are claimed to be gained from its use. In this second part of the review, there is a listing of each Time Management expert's handling of the Quiet Hour, followed by a discussion of the literature's strengths and weaknesses in this regard.

The Use of Time in the Workplace

It is important to make two points of clarification prior to presentation of the literature. One point regards the meaning of the word "manager" as it is used here, and in much of the literature, and one point regards the fact that most Time Management studies concentrate on managers only and not the entire staff.

The term "manager" as used in this discussion embraces a much broader segment of the work population than is customarily applied to those whose title is "manager" at the office. "Manager" in this presentation, and for the remainder of this discussion, refers to anyone high enough in the organization to meet the rather loosely adhered-to criteria of having: 1.) official control over other people's work; 2.) the power to make decisions; and 3.) the capability to manipulate at least some of their time. The term "manager" therefore, may refer to a line-supervisor, a middle manager, a superintendent, a president,

or a Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The second point that merits clarification regards the fact that, granted a few exceptions, the studies presented here, are in reference to the manager's use of time, not the time use of the entire staff. The problem created by this almost exclusive emphasis on managers' time is that the conclusions cannot safely be generalized to the entire workforce, whereas the Quiet Hour -- as a solution -- is meant for all. When it is reported, for example, that Time Management principles are utilized by less than half of the subjects in a survey, it must be remembered that the "subjects" hold the position of at least supervisor. It cannot be assumed that the subordinates of those subjects necessarily underutilize Time Management principles also, even though the Quiet Hour makes that assumption to some degree.

It is simply not known whether some or all of the time dilemmas of a manager are common to the members of the staff; no one has tracked the day of a secretary or an accountant thoroughly enough to know what their dilemmas are or how they compare to their bosses'. It is also not known the degree to which the manager's time dilemmas effect the time use of the staff; no one has identified the ineffectiveness created by the manager who confuses his or her priorities or interrupts a staff without regard for their present task. These points have sparked

speculative comment, but have not been documented by research.[6]

The Studies

Below is a listing of 12 studies conducted to determine the way in which managers spend their time, the way in which they identify their time management problems, and the degree to which they put Time Management principles into practice. These studies focus primarily on the work habits of managers who work in business and industrial settings; the one exception is Webber's study of United States Senators. The studies are listed chronologically and identified by the researcher's name. Only those features of each study which bear relevance on this research are mentioned.

Sune Carlson (1951) pioneered the work of studying how managers spend their time. His study of nine Dutch executives established both methodological and substantive foundations upon which subsequent researchers have relied heavily.

Carlson collected most of his data from four weeks' worth of daily diaries that each of his subjects kept. (The diaries were supplemented by the records of each subject's secretary and

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[6] Lakein (1973), Drucker (1967), Mackenzie (1972), and Webber (1980) all admonish managers for treating their staff with disrespect and note the consequential inefficiency of disturbing a staffer who is doing work in the interest of the manager's own goals.

Carlson's on-site observations.)

Those of Carlson's findings which bear mention in the context of this research are: 1.) that managers spend too little time alone (as little as half hour per day); 2.) that their work is too much determined by others; and 3.) that work is too frequently and too easily interrupted. Carlson's subjects' diaries revealed that the average length of undisturbed time was a mere 8 minutes.

Tom Burns (1957) examined the work day of 76 top British managers. His subjects kept diaries for three to five weeks. Burns determined: 1.) that managers spend a great percentage (80% in his study) of their time talking, usually to each other and 2.) that the average manager performed 25 different tasks (or "episodes") in a day -- and that for some managers, the number of episodes was as high as 50 per day.

H. Luijk (1963) studied 25 Dutch executives by observing their work day and substantiated Carlson's findings. Luijk too, found: 1.)a disturbing frequency of interruptions; his executives averaged seven minutes of undisturbed time (to Carlson's eight minutes) and 2.) that the average executive received four phone calls and three visitors per hour. Luijk also found: 3.) that his executives spent 3% of their time on planning and 4.) that executives behave too impulsively; they respond to the immediate situation and move from one task to another with little sense of priorities.

George Copeman (1963), whose study of 58 British executives increased the concern for the frequency of interruptions in the managers' day, used Time Logs to collect data. His data led to these recommendations: 1.) that managers need to consciously control the interruptions; 2.) that managers should converse less; and 3.) that managers should spend more time on creative work, of which planning is a large part.

It is noteworthy that Copeman's subjects themselves suggested that their efficiency could be improved by organizing their time so that they have periods of uninterrupted work at the office and other periods when they are available for communication with colleagues, subordinates, and superiors.

F. de P. Hanika (1963) concurred. Hanika, who teaches at Cambridge College in England, based his conclusions on data gleaned from his students' observations of themselves and others in the work world. Hanika asserted: 1.) that managers spend too little time thinking, reading and planning ("Data for middle managers run as low as 3% during working hours."); 2.) that managers talk a great deal ("more than half the day"); and 3.) that managers are interrupted much too frequently.

J. H. Horne and Tom Lupton (1965) studied 66 British managers for one week. These subjects, who self-recorded their time and tasks, also indicated: 1.) that there is an abundance of talking and 2.) that there is a minimal amount (fewer than five hours per week) of "solitary reflection and decision."

Horne and Lupton cautioned any interpretation of their findings; they pointed out that until there has been some relationship established between the amount of time spent on specific kinds of tasks and the degree to which effectiveness is a consequence, the figures have limited value. A discussion relevant to this position follows the Listing of Studies.

Rosemary Stewart (1967) formulated her study from the work of Sune Carlson. Hoping to improve upon what he had begun, she used the diary method to track the time use of 160 managers in the United Kingdom for four weeks. Her findings are similar to Carlson and others. She asserted: 1.) that managers are frequently engaged in converstion (60% of the time, compared with Burns' 80%); 2.) that interruptions are a problem (Her subjects could work for a half hour or more without interruptions only about once every two days.); 3.) that many of the managers' interruptions are self-imposed (They initiate phone calls, for example.); and 4.) that managers work too impulsively (a point made by Luijk and Carlson) and erratically. "It is easier," says Stewart, "to be a grasshopper jumping from one problem to another, than a beaver chewing away at a tough task."

One of Stewart's most valuable contributions was her idea (perhaps influenced by the suggestion of Copeman's subjects) of striking a balance between a manager's time in isolation and a manager's time in contact -- an idea that Webber and Lakein especially later addressed with emphasis. Stewart's point was

that it is in the balance of the two kinds of time that managers can be most effective; both are necessary, but an excess of either creates problems.

Leo Moore (1968) interviewed 3,000 managers, indivdually and in small groups, over a period of six years. Moore collected his data by first having each interviewee make two lists -- one of their time wasters and one of possible solutions to those time wasters. He conducted discussions with those same managers who talked about the lists.

Moore found amazing uniformity among the items on the lists of time wasters; he discovered (like Mackenzie, 1972) that while the items are prioritized differently on the lists, a core of 10 time wasters appear with amazing consistency. [7]

Moore had other points of interest to offer: 1.) that interruptions created by the phone and visitors were two of the consistent top 10 time wasters; 2.) that managers identified firefighting as another of the top 10 time wasters, yet expressed a sense of futility at any kind of "fire prevention" ("Dedicated managers simply respond when the alarm sounds," says Moore, who sounds as though he agrees that the situation is hopeless.); and 3.) that managers identified the pile of professional reading as an overwhelming burden.

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[7] The ten time wasters are: the telephone, meetings, reports, visitors, delegation, procrastination, firefighting, special requests, delays, and reading.

Moore sums up his findings with a statement and comment about the importance of planning and scheduling. He claims that his interviewees, unfortunately, could not be convinced that it is possible to plan and schedule one's day and stick to the schedule, a finding similar to Adcock and Lee's. (See below.)

Adcock Robert and J. W. Lee (1971) offered a different kind of study. Rather than trying to find out how managers spend their time, they attempted to ascertain the degree to which Time Management principles were actually being put into practice in the workplace. Having culled the Time Management literature, they formulated a list of 10 Time Management principles that they considered to be the basic ones. Using a 43 item multiple-choice questionnaire, they polled 64 aerospace management and administrative personnel to ascertain the degree to which these 10 Time Management prinicples were being put into practice. Some of those findings are relevant here: 1.) that the majority of the respondents, while they have daily plans in their heads, do not commit those plans to paper; 2.) that most respondents set priorities, but only one-third stick to them; 3.) that most respondents believe it is not possible for a manager to preschedule his or her day and adhere to as much as 50% of that schedule; 4.) that a mere 28% of the managers group similar tasks (like phone calls) prior to carrying them out; 5.) that most managers have no policy for and do not control interruptions; and 6.) that 68% schedule less than one hour of quiet time per day.

Henry Mintzberg (1975) studied five chief executive officers (CEO's) in America. His findings led him to assert: 1.) that managers are not the "reflective, systematic planners" that the textbooks would have one believe:

> They work at an unrelenting pace; their activities are characterized by brevity, variety and discontinuity... they are strongly oriented to action and dislike reflective activities.

Mintzberg's further revealed: 2.) that half of his CEO's activities lasted less than nine minutes (which is different from Burn's data where the mangers tasks averaged 15 to 20 minutes in duration.); 3.) that the CEO's talked frequently (78%, compared with Burns's 80% and Stewart's 60%); 4.) that they did not put plans on paper (similar to what Adcock and Lee found); and 5.) that they are "real-time responders to stimuli."

Ross Webber (1980) studied the time use of U.S. Senators. He interviewed 20 and chose five from that pool to study intensely. Webber, who asserts that the Senator's experience is similar to an executive's in many ways, noted that an event to which someone must respond happens every five minutes. (Webber subsequently coined the term "fractionated day.")

In conjunction with that phenomenon, Webber noted another feature of the work process that had not been identified by researchers preceeding him. To illustrate this feature, Webber tells of one administrative assistant who explained in response to Webber's inquiry, why, during what eventually became a

20-minute expanse of undisturbed time, he would not start a task that he knew needed doing. The administrative assistant, it is revealed in the story, would not begin a task because he expected an interruption to prevent him from completing it. In other words, Webber concludes, the anticipation of an interruption costs the employee as much time and productivity as the interruption itself would have, had it happened.

Phillip Marvin (1980) surveyed 1,369 American managers (a mixture of presidents, vice-presidents, managers, and supervisors) in organizations of varying sizes. His data revealed features of the work process that indicate the misuse of time. He concluded: 1.) that managers, who are usually moved into their position from the rank and file below where they were accustomed to "doing" rather than "thinking," continue to work in that manner despite the fact that the management position requires more thinking and less doing and 2.) that managers spend 20-30% of their time either unproductively (doing tasks that do not contribute to a goal) or, worse yet, counterproductively (doing tasks that actually interfere with goal achievement). Marvin also noted: 3.) that half of this sample said they could reduce the amount of time they spent on work by over 40% without losing any productivity and 4.) that these managers give an average of 12% of their working hours to emergencies.

Summary

The 12 studies listed above document features of the work life of over 5,000 managers in Holland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. More specifically, these studies record the ways in which managers spent their time at work, the way in which they indentified their problems with time, and the degree to which they employed Time Management strategies. For purposes of this discussion, only those findings relevant to the concept and application of the Quiet Hour are offered.

These 12 studies indicate the presence of seven features of time use and work habits that common sense would lead one to believe would interfere with a manager's personal effectiveness and the organization's level of productivity. Those features are:

1.)The workplace is a highly interactive place. Managers spend as much as 80% of their time in conversation.

2.)The work day is fractionated; managers are interrupted as frequently as every five to eight minutes.

3.)The working process of most managers is not a carefully planned procedure; most managers do not put daily plans on paper. They feel that the practice is an act of futility; two-thirds of those polled said that they would be unable to abide by a daily plan, anyway.

4.)The work effort is riddled with frequent "crises;"

managers spend as much as 12% of their time "firefighting," yet consider it one of the 10 worse time wasters.

5.)Managers' work is mostly reactive; they work impulsively and in response to "real-time stimuli." (Mintzberg, 1975). They have little sense of predetermined priorities and do not weigh daily occurrences in terms of relative importance.

6.)Managers' activities are "characterized by brevity, variety and discontinuity" (Stewart, 1967). Some managers do as many as 50 little tasks in one day. Task duration may average as little as nine minutes per task.

7.)Conversely, managers get very little time to think, plan, and do creative work. Some reports indicate that managers spend as little as 3% of their time thinking and planning.

The Quiet Hour can do two things that virtually obliterate all seven of the problems above. Assuming that people use the Quiet Hour as intended, it, first, promotes daily planning, a highly valuable, but horribly underutilized, activity. Daily planning, done correctly, compels one to think carefully about the expenditure of the next eight hours. It asks that one consider the relative importance of tasks, as well as choose better and worse times of day. Daily planning is claimed to promote a more active posture to work (as opposed to a reactive one) inasmuch as one has decided what to do.

The Quiet Hour's other feature that addresses the seven problems above is its gift of sustained concentration. The Quiet

Hour is a daily dose of quality time -- a unique opportunity to work undisturbed long enough to get something done. The Quiet Hour promotes, among other vital tasks, preparation for meetings, professional reading, and/or creative problem solving. The hour is also useful for doing a succession of smaller tasks, as an undisturbed hour affords momentum and speed.

Three Editorial Notes

In addition to the points made above, there are three issues embedded in the data of these 12 studies that bear relevance to the Quiet Hour and deserve mention here; each is addressed in the following discussion. The first issue regards the practice of time and task differentiation as a Time Management skill and a possible by-product of the Quiet Hour policy. The second issue regards the manager's difficulty in practicing new, more efficient work behaviors in the office. The third issue is a note of caution in correlating the findings of these studies with effectiveness and productivity.

Task and Time Differentiation

Perhaps one of the most valuable Time Management skills is a two-step procedure for matching tasks with time. It is the ability to first, differentiate among tasks as to the degree of concentrated effort each requires; and secondly, to arrange the doing of those tasks so that the time and conditions are

conducive to that degree of concentrated effort. To know, for example, that the preparation of next Wednesday's agenda is only a mildly challenging task and to save doing it for just before lunch when the office is busy and the phone is likely to ring...is a time-saving approach. To know, for example, that writing a summary statement for presentation at a board meeting is a very difficult task that requires much thought and to save doing it for the next few mornings of quiet time...is a time-saving approach. This practice may be called task-time differentiation [8] and its early stages of conceptual development are to be found in the studies of Copeman (1963), Stewart (1967), and Webber (1980) where there is expressed a need to segregate different kinds of time so that appropriately different kinds of tasks can be accomplished.

The cry seems to be that what managers are doing is not so bad, but that it all runs together; tasks of varying degree of intensity are attempted arbitrarily throughout the day. Little if any purposeful attention is given to the appropriateness of the task-time match. Much effectiveness, it is speculated, is lost in the muddle. Copeman's subjects clearly expressed a desire to separate quiet time and contact time; Stewart mentioned the need for both quiet and contact and emphasized the importance of bringing the two into balance; Webber gave them modern day

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[8] "Time-task differentiation" is this researcher's term; no where in the literature is this concept offered quite this way.

names -- "Discretionary time" and "Response time." [9]

Lakein (1973) later identified a third category -- a kind of time when one sets about doing quiet work in a condition of willing availability. The attitude here is that of expected interruptions and the quiet work takes second priority. The condition of the third kind of time is not so unusual; in fact, the condition happens frequently. It is the attitude that is different and makes it work. The attitude of interruptions first, work second, eliminates the time consuming frustration of an attitude based on the opposite set of priorities. Using Lakein's suggestion, a mere moment's worth of undisturbed time becomes a gift. Time-task differentiation is a factor again; it is assumed that the employee would choose a task that "gives" with interruptions.

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[9] Other labels contributed later to the same concept are Lakein's (1973) "Contact time" and "Thinking time" and Elicano's (1978) "Controllable time" and "Uncontrollable time."

The Managers' Dilelemma

Managers seem caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, they complain about not having enough time to do all the work that needs doing. On the other hand, they admit that were they to reduce their working hours by as much as 40%, they would lose nothing in productivity (Marvin, 1980).

They believe they have little or no control over their time and tasks (Moore, 1968; Adcock and Lee, 1971). They believe that Time Management strategies work in theory, but that they personally cannot, either because they lack the personal will and discipline or because there is no organizational sanction, practice Time Management strategies which seem to violate organizational norms. A prevailing idea, for example, is that individual managers cannot stick to a daily TO DO List because emergencies render the list impotent and the time and effort it took to write the list becomes an insult to the process itself.

A Word of Caution

A third and final note is sparked by the comments of Horne and Lupton (1965) who make a point about the fact that it would be unfair to suppose a definitive correlation between some of these findings and a degree of personal effectiveness. They issue a word of caution which reminds the field of researchers (and potential users) that there are no documented indices for effectiveness and that nothing can be said without careful reservation about the way in which certain work behaviors make

one more or less effective.

There are anecdotal endorsements and common sense principles that prompt careful attention to many facets of the Time Management/Quiet Hour struggle. It is difficult, for example, to ignore a statement like the one made by an executive vice president interviewed by this researcher who said, "For most people here, it's [the Quiet Hour] the most productive time of the day." When one sees repeatedly in the literature the story of Ivy Lee, the Time Management consultant, and Charles Schwab, President of Bethlehem Steel, the merits of a TO DO List can not be scoffed at so easily.[10] When it is acknowledged that many managers come to work an hour early to work undisturbed, the concept of quiet time takes on some validity and the question of how difficult it is to obtain it once the work day has begun is punctuated.

Anecdotal endorsements and common sense do not measure anything, Horne and Lupton would caution, and the discriminating thinker is reminded that it is unsafe to make assumptions about the outcomes of Time Management approaches. A description of a

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[10] Schwab asked Lee, a Time Management trainer, to teach him his best Time Management idea in exchange for a fee to be determined after adoption and based on Schwab's value of the benefits. Lee showed Schwab how to make a TO DO List each day, pick #1, stick to it until it was finished, go back to the list, pick another #1 and so forth. Schwab did it, taught it to his staff and sent Lee a check for $25,000 (a shocking amount 30 years ago), saying it was the single most effective procedure he had ever instituted.

manager's time use and work habits is helpful in establishing a base line for change and is valuable for an individual manager as feedback. Despite the temptation to believe it might be so, the fact remains that descriptive information about a manager's work day does not establish a firm cause and effect relationship between Time Management practices and increased productivity, although some kind of measurement might eventually be possible.

The Literature's Treatment of the Quiet Hour

This section of the review of the literature addresses the Time Management literature's treatment of the Quiet Hour. This section is divided into three parts. The first part is a listing of the more prominent Time Management experts, each with a brief description of that expert's advocacy of the Quiet Hour and any unique contributions. (The listing sequence is determined by strength of advocacy; ie., the lesser enthusists are last.) The second part is a discussion of the literature's presentation of the Rules and Regulations of the Quiet Hour and the literature's recommendations for how to use the time. The third part is a critique of the literature's strengths and weaknesses in its treatment of the Quiet Hour.

Time Management Experts Who Advocate the Quiet Hour

Lauren R. Januz and Susan K. Jones (1981) devote more attention to the Quiet Hour than any other expert; they spend a whopping seven pages promoting it and explaining how to use it. "Companies that have tried it report great enthusiasm and a measurable jump in management output," they claim. Furthermore, they assert that the Quiet Hour "helps you get started with other Time Management techniques."

They suggest that the Quiet Hour is best introduced by a manager who uses a personal quiet hour for her or himself first and then sells the organization "from personal experience" backed with documentation on the number of tasks completed with use of the quiet time. To get "full value," the entire staff should practice it, they recommend.

What to do in the hour is suggested in terms, not so much of planning and thinking, but of concentration and momentum. Januz and Jones also suggest tasks for clerical workers; they are the only experts to do so.

Januz and Jones are quite helpful to the prospective user. They talk about dealing with exceptions to the rules, and to make implementation easy, they offer a variety of tools. Among them is a "Quiet Hour" Stop Sign and a sample memo to send to those people and organizations who would most likely try to make contact during the hour. They even suggest a code name for the

manager. They also mention the vigilance and monitoring required to keep the Quiet Hour alive and well. Perhaps their best contribution is a simple, rather sensible evaluation instrument for that purpose.

Merrill E. Douglass and Donna N. Douglass (1981) are a close second to Januz and Jones. Douglass and Douglass talk about the Quiet Hour in their book (1981), in a management pamphlet, "How to Handle Interruptions," and in their April, 1983 issue of Time Talk, a Time Management Newsletter that their organization distributes to managers in the field. They suggest that, while individual quiet time is desirable, the "greater benefits" are gained from the entire staff's participation. "Employees at all levels have unanimously applauded the move to quiet time," they say. Douglass and Douglass claim that the average office worker wastes 45% of the day and that a "regular quiet time could change all that."

Douglass and Douglass offer 10 steps for implementation, a longer list than anyone else's. Like Januz and Jones, they suggest that the Quiet Hour be discussed with the staff before it is adopted and they warn that it will require monitoring and adjustments over time. One of the unique suggestions offered by this husband and wife duo is that of a pilot project. "Experiment with one," they suggest. "Evaluate its effect, and then begin implementation."

Robert Moskowitz (1981) calls the Quiet Hour "a great device for getting more work done" and devotes a good portion of his book to its adoption. Much of his discussion focuses on the individual version. In that discussion, he mentions ideas that are applicable to the institutional Quiet Hour, however, such as getting materials and the workspace ready before the hour begins.

When he mentions the institutional version, he does it with conviction and suggests that in its formality, the Quiet Hour gives the individual the self-control that would be too difficult a struggle alone. He advocates concentrating on one or two special tasks during the hour, offers a sample memo to send to other organizations, and discusses the emergency code word that the manager and secretary need to establish. "Education and good manners make it work," says Moskowitz.

R. Alec Mackenzie (1981) may have been the first to use the term "Quiet Hour" in the literature. In his 1970 publication of Managing Time at the Top, he cites the a Quiet Hour at Michigan Millers Insurance Company in Lansing, Michigan and describes that effort as "highly successful:"

> Based on an old proverb, 'As the first hour of the day goes, so goes the day,' the quiet hour [at Michigan Millers] has promoted good working habits and over 90 percent of the employees and managers found that this new policy had helped them with their work.

In The Time Trap (1972) he give the Quiet Hour less attention, but seems no less convinced of its value in his repetition of the Michigan Millers story. In his article "Too Little Time...or Too Many Interruptions?" (1976) he claims that the Quiet Hour will enable a manager to get three hours of regular work done in one.

One of Mackenzie's greatest contributions is his treatment of the whole staff issue. He makes a strong point in both publications (1970 and 1972) that in order for Time Management practices to be effective, everyone must do them. Furthermore he urges bosses to be more respectful of their subordinates' time.

Another of Mackenzie's contributions is his promotion of daily planning. He claims that the daily TO DO list is underutilized and underestimated as a tool for effectiveness.

Mackenzie's article "Take a Quiet Hour" (1977), co-authored

with Dennis Lekan, is the one piece of literature that bases its ideas on empirical data. Lekan, under Mackenzie's initial guidance, instituted a Quiet Hour in his company, and the article's message comes from that endeavor plus the comment of others who tried the Quiet Hour in their organizations.

Mackenzie and Lekan support their advocacy of the Quiet Hour on the importance of giving managers the time to think and plan. They call the Quiet Hour the "most important step" toward meeting that end. They state unambiguously, however, that the Quiet Hour should be implemented on every level of the organization.

Their suggestions in regard to implementation go beyond the usual list; they mention the need for training ("Avoid the 'What am I supposed to do in my quiet hour?' syndrome.") and suggest that the organization be prepared for kidding ("You're having a WHAT??????" a caller may exclaim.).

Mackenzie with Waldo in About Time (1981) considers the Quiet Hour "not a luxury...[but] one of the most effective time and stress management approaches known."

Peter Drucker (1966) contributes to the conceptual underpinnings of the Quiet Hour without ever calling it by name. (The Effective Executive (1966) appeared four years prior to Mackenzie's first publication.)

Drucker lays out several important concepts in one story about a bank president who met with Drucker once a month for two years on matters of corporate structure. In the story, Drucker

makes several strong points: 1.) the criticalness of being prepared for concentrated effort (doing your "homework"); 2.) disallowing interruptions; 3.) doing only one important task in any one session; (Moskowitz and Webber would concur); and 4.) knowing one's optimum span of concentration.

He also makes a point of the need for quiet time, (A well managed plant is a boring place," he suggests.), and he talks about the importance of consolidating scattered, wasted pieces of time into chunks of "Discretionary time." He also attends to the dilemma of the staff:

> Non- managers are no better off. They too are bombarded with demands on their time which add little, if anything, to their productivity, and yet cannot be disregarded.

Ross Webber (1980) promotes the Quiet Hour as a way to enable personal quiet time:

> In a crowded office with many visitors, telephone calls, and conversation, it just may be too noisy even for a self-disciplined scheduler really to concentrate during his or her discretionary time.

Webber also offers a few rules and regulations, promotes the idea of doing a single, important task, rather than several, and recommends that the Quiet Hour be held during prime time (like Lakein's "gold time"). He reports that several Senators and their respective staffs hold a Quiet Hour two or three times per week.

The remainder of the Time Management experts, Lakein (1973);

Winston (1978); LeBoeuf (1979); and Ferner (1980), treat the Quiet Hour in a similar, if lesser, fashion. Their advocacy stems from what they perceive to be a need to reduce interruptions, extend concentration, and put the important tasks ahead of the trivial and or the seemingly urgent. For most, the Quiet Hour policy is merely an extension of the personal quiet time, which in many cases, gets more attention in their writing than the institutional version does.

One particularly noteworthy contribution among the lesser enthusists comes from Lakein, who gives attention to the psychlogical resistance to quiet time. "Are you sure you really want everybody to stay away from you?" he quips.

Workplace frenzy has a strong emotional appeal, Lakein would assert. Some employees like the socializing aspects of the office; giving that up for quiet and concentration is not necessarily a desirable trade-off. Stewart (1967) concurs in her reference to grasshoppers and beavers. Work life is simply easier, therefore preferable, if one is a grasshopper; jumping from one task to another requires less thinking and is usually much more fun.

Rules and Regulations of the Quiet Hour

The Rules and Regulations of the Quiet Hour are offered with consistency by all of the Time Management experts and remain

relatively simple: there is no inter or intra staff communication and there is no unnecessary movement or noise. (No duplicating machines for example, should be operated.) A secretary -- or a pool of secretaries who rotate the responsibility -- fends off would-be interruptions. She or he takes phone messages (An answering machine will work, says Stephanie Winston (1978).) and postpones all attempted visits.

In addition to the basic rules, there are several other recommendations mentioned in the literature that will help to set the Quiet Hour in motion and keep it working:

1.) It is recommended that before the Quiet Hour is implemented, the organization identify those people and organizations with whom they have frequent contact and send those people and organizations memos explaining the impending institution of a Quiet Hour from such-and-such a time to such-and-such a time.

2.) An emergency signal should be established between each manager and those people outside the staff or organization who may have urgent business from time to time. It is recommended that a code name be established between the outsider and the manager and that the secretary be made aware.

3.) Individuals may be granted exceptions; sometimes it makes sense to "violate" the Quiet Hour. Exceptions should be granted infrequently, however, and only with the express consent of the manager.

4.) It is recommended that a signal begin the hour of quiet. It adds an "offical" sense to the time and keeps everybody together. ("It's so easy for it to get sloppy," said one company president where the Quiet Hour was a policy for several years.)

Douglass and Douglass (1980) suggest two ideas to signal the start. One is a cheery "Good Morning," over the public address system. Less formal, and perhaps appropriate only for a smaller staff, is Januz and Jones' suggestion of having the manager don a red baseball cap as the signal.

5.) It is recommended that people prepare themselves beforehand with information and materials that they will need for an hour's worth of productivity.

More

In addition to the list of how-to's are a few of the literature's suggestions for preparation strategies that, while they require more work, may pay off in a smoother implementation process.

One of those recommendations is that the staff keep Time Logs for two weeks prior to the first attempt at the Quiet Hour so that they see the patterns of work and time use that they have grown accustomed to. These data then provide a base line for change.

A similar suggestion is to have the secretaries chart the incoming calls and visitors for a few weeks prior to the implementation of the Quiet Hour so that the organization has a more accurate list of who needs informative memos.

The most elaborate preparation recommended is Douglass and Douglass' proposal (1980) that the staff or organization do a pilot project. Several weeks ahead of the intended implementation, the staff does a trial-run, evaluates that attempt, and makes necessary adjustments for a more effective Quiet Hour.

One of the major issues in the implementation process is the role of the manager who, it is assumed, can initiate and maintain the Quiet Hour merely out his or her personal desire (or on orders from above) to do so. The usual scenario in the literature has the manager become enthused about the Quiet Hour from reading a Time Management book or from attending a Time Management seminar. Once permission is obtained from upper levels of the organization, the manager discusses the idea with the staff. It is suggested that the manager spend several meetings with the staff discussing the Quiet Hour and coming to some agreement about its desirability, its implementation process, and the rules of time use. For example, it is recommended specifically that the staff help to decide which hour will be the Quiet Hour.

The literature anticipates that staff members will feel they

have no right to "shut off" the rest of the world while they do their work; it is the manager's job to dissuade the fears in these early stages of implementation. The manager is then expected to train the staff in the skills of goal setting and planning. He or she is also expected to train the secretary (or the pool of secretaries) in Quiet Hour diplomacy. This topic will be addressed more critically in the following section of this discussion.

What To Do During the Hour

The literature recommends most consistently that the Quiet Hour be used for planning. Workers are encouraged to plan the day, plan the week, and/or plan the implementation of some chosen project. The perceived benefits of planning, to save time and enable a more organized work process, are promoted most adamantly, but not solely, by Mackenzie. According to a study that Mackenzie himself conducted (1970), every hour of planning is repaid in two to three hours of implementation. Whether his claim has legitimacy or not, he is quoted often by his colleagues who surely believe that, to some extent, his claims are valid.

The literature suggests other activities as well. One of the more interesting suggestions is that workers do things that increase their self-knowledge. Webber (1980); Mintzberg (1975); and McCay (1959) are the strong proponents of this idea.

Believing that workers suffer from having lost sight of their inspirational foundations, their values, and their own work process, these three experts recommend that employees use at least some of those quiet hours to take personal stock and make plans for self-improvement. "The manager's effectiveness is significantly influenced by his insight into his own work," says Mintzberg (1975), who offers a series of questions to help one discover some of those insights. "Time-harried people take insufficient time for internal exploration," says Webber (1980) who found among his Senators numerous cases of men [sic] who had "lost track of who they are and what they believe." McCay (1959) chimes in, "You must give some attention every day to the...refining of your techniques," and offers a strategy called McCay's Quarterly Objectives, endorsed by Webber, for that very purpose.

Carlson (1979) and Drucker (1966) advocate quiet thought and reading as another possible use of the Quiet Hour. Carlson's study revealed a deficiency in this area so striking that Carlson identified it as one of four "administrative deficiencies."

A fourth kind of recommended activity is doing tasks that require momentum. These are tasks that do not require deep thinking as much as continuous attention. A returning vacationer who uses the Quiet Hour to plow through a stack of waiting mail is one example offered by Januz and Jones (1981).

Summary and Critique

The Time Management literature gives unqualified endorsement of the Quiet Hour as a strategy for infusing the work process with thoughtfulness and promoting the practice of planning on a daily basis. The Time Management literature proposes without reservation that in this unique kind of time each day, distinguishable as a vehicle for concentrated effort, personal effectiveness and organizational productivity will be enhanced. This one, undisturbed hour equals up to three other hours of the work day, claims Mackenzie, whose colleagues rally behind him with similar statements.

The Quiet Hour does not suffer from a lack of professional support; it is consistently offered by the Time Management experts as a way of getting in control of one's work, establishing a mood of productivity, and prompting subsequent Time Management behaviors. For all that the literature urges its adoption, however, it falls seriously short of offering a substantial implementation model and has thus far failed to systematically pin down the Quiet Hour's benefits and offer them in marketable terms. Furthermore, it makes what appears to be rather problematic assumptions about the ease with which a Quiet Hour can be implanted into an organization's work day. Several of these issues will be addressed here for deeper consideration.

Flaw: Failure to Address Employee's Use of the Hour

The literature ignores the question of whether people really know what to do with an hour of quiet, much less whether everyone is capable of sixty minutes of concentration.

The hour of quiet offers a unique opportunity; whether everyone on a staff knows how to use that opportunity is another question and one which has gone unaddressed by all except Lekan (1977) in the literature. There is no evidence to indicate that people struggle with what to do for the hour, nor is there evidence to the contrary.

Lekan (1977), Moskowitz (1981), and Douglass and Douglass (1980) offer some support for the idea that people do need training in preparation for Quiet Hour implementation. Lekan, whose article is based on his experience of implementing a Quiet Hour in his company, highly recommends training. Moskowitz (1981) takes a disposition toward the hour of quiet that reinforces Lekan's recommendation. Moskowitz regards the use of that time as a "skill," something to be learned and practiced until one develops an expertise in it. Douglass and Douglass suggest training for staff members, but the idea is addressed as a task for the manager, a problematic issue itself which is addressed in a subsequent discussion.

Januz and Jones (1981) add another dimension to the issue in their discussion of concentration and their strong recommendation that people increase their skills of sustained, focused

attention. Most people, they claim, have a concentration span of just 40 minutes. If that is so, what do employees do with the 20 remaining minutes that constitute the hour of quiet?

The majority of the literature, however, does not identify a need to help people to know how to use the hour. The prevailing assumption is that people crave the opportunity for concentrated effort and planning and will use it to its greatest effectiveness. Such an assumption may be fair for workers who are highly motivated or accustomed to taking individual initiative; it seems unfair to assume that everyone in a given organization falls into that category.

Flaw: Assumptions About the Manager's Ability to Train

The degree to which the implementation process is laid on the shoulders of the staff manager seems unrealistic and the question demands much greater attention than it has thus far received. As discussed in an earlier section of this paper, the Quiet Hour literature assumes that the manager involved in Quiet Hour implementation is trained in its every aspect, enthused and committed to its success, and has training skills at his or her disposal that will enable him or her to guide the staff to effective use of the hour. This super-manager, for example, is expected to prepare the staff both mentally and technically. Using group facilitation skills that he or she is assumed to have, he or she is supposed to guide the staff through decision making processes that determine such features as the hour of the

day that the quiet will take palce. Similarly, this super-manager is supposed to conduct group discussions which will address staff concerns and mitigate staff fears, such as their right to shut out the outside world.

The super-manager is expected to use her or his training skills to teach techniques such as planning (daily and longer range) and goal setting. Given the statistic that fewer than half of all managers use a TO DO List themselves, the expectation that they will teach the skill to others seems highly presumptuous.

The super-manager is also expected to train the secretary (who, it is presumed, already has exemplary skills of diplomacy and assertiveness) and to assess the Quiet Hour's on-going progress.

The literature assumes that the probability of finding managers with that number of qualities and skills, who are intellectually and emotionally committed to the Quiet Hour and who are willing to put the necessary amount of time on its implementation is great. This researcher questions such an assumption.

Flaw: Assumptions About Simplicity

In general, the literature's presentation of the Quiet Hour errs in the direction of assumed simplicity. Because the Quiet Hour concept is an uncomplicated one, the literature seems to address the implementation as equally uncomplicated. It forgets

that this simple procedure violates organizational norms of busyness and issues of personal self-discipline.

Strengths of the Literature

Despite a greater number of weaknesses, the Quiet Hour literature offers some points of strength and makes some significant contributions to the Time Management literature.

Among them, and perhaps the most important of the few to be identified here, is the elevation of the skill of daily planning to a rank more befitting a tool so critical to personal effectiveness. Much of the credit in this area goes to Mackenzie (1970, 1972 and 1978) who first stated that planning, in general, is the most important Time Management tool and that daily planning, specifically, is "dangerously" underutilized. He quotes a company president to make the point:

> Beside the task of acquiring the ability to organize a day's work, all else you will ever learn about management is but child's play.

Patten (1981) concurs. In response to Adcock and Lee's discovery that so few managers put daily plans on paper, he calls daily planning "the cornerstone of all other planning."

Webber (1980) strengthens the case by making speculative, but sensible, connections between daily plans and reactive behavior. He reasons that one who has predetermined what tasks need doing today and has put those decisions on paper is less likely to abandon them to the call of the "urgent" than someone

who has not taken the pains.

Secondly, the Time Management literature, in its efforts to promote the Quiet Hour, strengthens the integrity of the TO DO List, a basic Time Management tool which has suffered undue disrespect, as the form that daily planning takes. Most managers have continued to believe that making daily plans in their heads is an adequate mode of operation, a belief that the Time Management experts continue to refute. The literature that addresses the Quiet Hour as a time in which to do daily planning, stresses the necessity of a routine TO DO List for purposes of seeing options more clearly, choosing priorities more carefully, and scheduling commitments more realistically.

Perhaps Lakein's endorsement of the TO DO List offers the strongest statement for its use. In the introduction to How to Get Control of Your, Time and Your Life (1973) he states that the one common demoninator among all of the good managers of time that he has met, is regular use of the TO DO List.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to document a problematic condition of the American workplace for which the Quiet Hour is a feasible solution. It has also pointed out the degree to which the Time Management experts support the Quiet Hour despite the fact that what they offer the would-be user is riddled with

assumptions and plagued by missing instructions. In summary, then, it can be acknowledged: 1.) that there is a bothersome condition in the workplace called frenzy (or busyness or activity) that is contrary to productive work habits; 2.) that the Quiet Hour seems like a sensible idea which addresses that bothersome condition; and 3.) that it is not known what has to happen for a Quiet Hour to be adopted successfully.

This study addresses the third of those three acknowledgements. This study has gathered data and developed theory that will enable a deeper professional understanding of how the Quiet Hour works. The intended outcome is the creation of a more successful inplementation strategies and useful diagnostic tools.

C H A P T E R III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Time Management in general, certainly the Quiet Hour in particular, has historically been a seat-of-the-pants operation. Since its inception 20 years ago, Time Management has maintained what credibility it does enjoy on the degree to which it makes sense and the frequency and impressiveness of users' testimonials.

Theory has long since, and noticeably, been absent. Despite the abundance of how-to instructions, and the whole-hearted advocacy of Quiet Hour adoption, there has been little offered that explains how and why the Quiet Hour works. Nowhere is there any theoretical basis for its implementation and use, much less a carefully developed strategy for its institution and maintenance in the workplace.

This study has made a contribution along these lines. It has investigated Quiet Hour implementation and use as it exists in the Amercian workplace today and gleaned from that effort a deeper understanding of how and why the Quiet Hour works.

This study was accomplished by using the principles and procedures of Grounded Theory Development, a methodology that is particularly suited to an investigation that begins not with a

hypothesis, but a question about what is. The end product of Grounded Theory Development is concepts, or theoretical propositions, that supply any sociologic phenomena with some kind of explanation.

Chapter III explains what Grounded Theory Development is and how it was applied to this particular study. There are two parts to this chapter. Part One is a general explanation of Grounded Theory Development. Part Two is an explanation of how Grounded Theory Development was applied to this study.

Part One: Grounded Theory Development

Grounded Theory is theory generated directly from the data. It is substantive theory, as opposed to formal theory, and therefore yields findings that, while not universally generalizable, do provide insightful and significant knowledge about the nature of the social world. Grounded Theory is theory that, in keeping its close, virtually obvious, ties with the empirical data from whence it came, offers a unique degree of validity and usefulness.

The process by which Grounded Theory is generated is different from the more frequently practiced approach to theory development, that of deductive, hypothesis testing, in that it does not begin with a priori assumptions and does not try to prove anything one way or another. The generation of Grounded

Theory seeks only to discover what has not been known before and has no stake in the outcome of its endeavors. Grounded Theory is applicable to both qualitative and quantitative research, although it is the former that will be addressed in this discussion and was used in this Quiet Hour study.

Grounded Theory has found its strongest proponents in Glaser and Strauss (The Discovery of Grounded Theory, 1967 and Theoretical Sensitivity, 1978 by Glaser alone), whose beliefs about the value of Grounded Theory and whose processes for generating Grounded Theory supplied this study with its basic investigative framework.

Grounded Theory is generated within a framework of investigation which begins with a rather broadly stated query, procedes through a process of coding and analysis, and is completed with one or more conceptual categories that explain some aspect of the empirical situation. It is this process of coding and analysis which guides the researcher through the maze of data and keeps the emerging category true to its source. This process of coding and analysis is the key to generating Grounded Theory and is referred to by Glaser and Strauss as a method of "constant comparison."

The method of constant comparison prescribes that each bit of datum, as it is recorded, is compared to and contrasted with all other recorded data. It is through this process of constant comparison that data indicate their degree of relevancy to each

other, to the empirical situation, and to the emergent theory. The purpose of this process is to work single bits of descriptive data into the context of a conceptual category which embraces, or has the potential to embrace, all relevant bits of data. This category then begins to take on the powers of explanation and becomes a building block of Grounded Theory.

As the process of constant comparison progresses and the bits of data are judged and worked according to their ability to contribute to the meaningfulness of the emerging category, characteristics of the category, called "properties" become apparent and serve to further refine the category. The eventual state of the constant comparison process is called theoretical saturation and is a condition wherein newly harvested bits of data merely reiterate the already identified properties of the category. When the discovery of exciting new evidence has ceased, the category is considered saturated.

In the constant comparative method, fresh data are pursued, not by a predetermined notion of where relevant information lies, but by an emergent one. This process is called theoretical sampling and allows the researcher to "work" the field and the data in a way that screens out much irrelevant data and encourages the "discovery" posture of investigation. The researcher's ability to pursue data in this manner requires theoretical sensitivity, a combination of intuitiveness, field savvy, and good common sense.

Data Analysis

Data utilized in this study were of two kinds: empirical and interpretive. Empirical data were those which gleaned from the substantive field; they were the interview transcripts, field notes from the on-site observations, relevant company documents, data from the preliminary study and other relevant information that appeared in the course of the investigation. Interpretive data in the form of "memos" are the analyst's record of her understanding of the empirical data.

In accordance with Glaser and Strauss's procedures, the discovery of Grounded Theory is not a process wherein all of the data are collected first and then analyzed afterward. This is a process of constant comparison wherein the data are collected and analyzed concurrently throughout the investigative effort. All bits of data, no matter what the means of acquisition, are worked in an integrative manner with constant consideration for emergence.

The process is alternately inductive and deductive; the data indicate a category, memos are made, and the category is taken back into the field for verification. Lest this statement be confused with the rather emphatically made comment in an earlier section that Grounded Theory is strictly an inductive procedure, it must be noted that the deductive work that occurs

intermittently is always in the service of the inductive.

Coding occurs in all stages of the analysis. Initially, data undergo a procedure called "open coding" and later are subjected to "selective coding". As their designations imply, the two approaches to coding move the process from a broad base to a focused one.

Open coding forces the analyst to code the data in every possible way. Preconceived notions and usual patterns of thinking are abandoned in favor of maximizing the number of coding designations any one piece of datum could possibly accept. Wild ideas are encouraged. The final stage of open coding occurs when the data have been fractured into the smallest possible pieces and each has been given the greatest number of possible codes.

Selective coding occurs next. Selective coding forces the analyst to delimit her coding to only those variables that relate to the core variable in sufficiently significant ways. Hence the coding work is focused on the one conceptual category under scrutiny. Selective coding and open coding together allow the analyst to work on the specific, mindful of the total context within which the specific exists.

As stated earlier, the process of constant comparison, of concurrently coding and sampling the field, is documented in the analyst's memos which serve both the process and product of Grounded Theory. The memos move the process; they are the

"theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships." Memos are the "frontier of the analyst's thinking," according to Glaser.

Later on when the theory has been created, the memos serve as evidence of how the theory, fresh from the field, was developed. It is in the memos that one can trace the theory's generative development and validate whatever claims are made about its relationship to the substantive field from which it came.

Part Two: Grounded Theory Development and This Study

The Participants

Six organizations all of whom were either using the Quiet Hour at the time of data gathering, or had used it at some time in the past, constituted a participant pool for this investigation. Several professional trainers who, according to the literature, had experience with the Quiet Hour were also participants, although their role was much less significant. One of these trainers was Alec Mackenzie who may have been the first person to give the Quiet Hour concept its popular designation and to suggest its value. Another trainer was Dennis Lekan, who instituted the Quiet Hour at his own company with Mackenzie's help and subsequently published, again with Mackenzie, the only

empirically based information on the Quiet Hour (1977).

All of the above organizations and individuals were discovered during a preliminary investigation conducted during the spring and summer of 1984. At that time contacts were made by telephone to ascertain the degree to which relevant data might be available. The companies, all of which were referenced in the literature, were approached with a request for an interview with the personnel director. That request was granted on several occasions, but additional contact often occurred in the process of finding that person. For example, in one company, this researcher was connected to a very informed and cooperative staff person who answered the phone in the personnel director's absence. In another case, where there was no personnel director, the company president took the call. It appeared that data were in fact available and that Quiet Hour users were reachable.

Contacts with trainers yielded less data by comparison, although it was Alex Mackenzie who talked the most extensively and suggested that this researcher contact an insurance company in the New England states. Mackenzie believed that this company was then a Quiet Hour user and might be available for more extensive investigation.

That company was in fact contacted and eventually agreed to be a major participant in the study. Their proximity to this researcher's home made them a prime candidate for in-person interviews and observation.

Several preliminary consultations between their HRD and this researcher took place in the fall of 1984 whereby the terms of the research effort were worked out. It was agreed that in exchange for their cooperation, a report, assessing the organization's seven-year old Quiet Hour, would be submitted by this researcher at the completion of the data gathering process. (See Appendix A for this formal report that was sent to the company in June, 1985.)

It was decided then that an adequate pool of interviewees was avaialble. Most of the interviews were personnel at the nearby insurance company, but many contacts were made by phone to personnel in the other organizations across the United States.

Data Gathering Methods

Several approaches to data gathering were employed during the investigation. They were: (1) interviews with employees at organizations that were using or had used the Quiet Hour and with Time Management-Quiet Hour trainers and consultants; (2) on-site observations of employees at the nearby insurance company; (3) company documents and written materials from organizations and trainers; and (4) data from the preliminary study. Each of these four approaches is discussed in greater detail below.

Interviews

Lines of Inquiry

The substance of the interviews changed as the study progressed. In accordance with Grounded theory procedures, interviews conducted early in the study were of a general nature in an attempt to establish a broad data base. Interviews conducted later on were more focused, as the study began to concentrate on a particular conceptual category.

The initial interviews were more like discussions; interviewees were asked -- in just these words -- "How does the Quiet Hour work here?" in an attempt to elicit employees' impressions of how the Quiet Hour worked as an organizational phenomenon and how it worked for them personally.

When such a broad and general approach did not elicit enough data from the interviewee, the researcher made use of some or all of the question format (offered below) that broke the larger question into three, more specific lines of inquiry.

Line of Inquiry #1: The historical development of the Quiet Hour (its initiation and development from then until now).

Questions: 1.) How was the Quiet Hour initiated, 2.) Was there a person (or persons) responsible for its initiation, 3.) What were the motivating forces of its initiation, 4.) Was there any preliminary training, 5.) What were the employees' reactions to its initiation, 6.) What problems have arisen with it or because of it over the years, 7.) Were there times when it

faltered and how was it secured again?

Line of Inquiry #2: The Quiet Hour (its mechanical operation and employees' perceptions of its value as an institutional policy).

Questions: 1.) What rules and regulations guide its operation, 2.) What time of day is it; how and why was that time chosen, 3.) How is the version used here different from the textbook version, 4.) How strictly are rules and regulations adhered to, 5.) How are extenuating circumstances handled, 6.) Are there maintenance and/or monitoring strategies to keep it going, 7.) Does the Quiet Hour prompt other Time Management practices, and 8.) How do employees regard it as a part of their organizational life?

Line of Inquiry #3: The quiet hour (the individual's use of the hour itself and their perceptions about its value as a tool for personal effectiveness).

Questions: 1.) Do people really do daily planning, 2.) What else do they do in the hour, 3.) Do people perceive their use of the hour as valuable, 4.) Do managers tend to use the time differently from staff, 5.) How might employees make better use of the hour, 6.) How does the hour of quiet effect the remainder of the day?

Interviews with the Time Management/Quiet Hour trainers and consultants proceeded similarly -- from the general to the specific. Trainers and consultants were asked questions about

their knowledge of Quiet Hours as they operate in specific organizations (Often the opening question was, "Do you know of any organizations that use a Quiet Hour? How does it work there?"), the degree to which they incorporate the Quiet Hour into their Time Management training, and the degree to which they see value in the Quiet Hour as an institutional policy.

Access to Interviewees

As mentioned earlier, interviews conducted at the nearby insurance company had been cleared through formal channels and the terms of the research effort were clearly defined. Permission was officially granted for three days of morning observation and three full days of interviews. [11] Follow-up phone calls were approved. An official in the HRD agreed to select personnal in accordance with this reseacher's specifications and to set up the interview schedules. An interview room was also provided by the company.

It was decided that this researcher would conduct two days of successive interviews and observation in March of 1985 and return for a single day of interviews and observation approximately one month hence. This arrangement was at the request of the researcher who wanted enough time in between the visits to the insurance company to investigate the Quiet Hour experience at the other five companies in the United States.

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[11] Five days had been requested; three were granted.

This was done in accordance with Glaser and Strauss's recommendation that phenomena be compared and contrasted across organizations in order to get more generalizable data.

Interviews for the first two days at the insurance company were, as requested by the researcher, a cross-section of personnel. Twelve formally arranged interview sesions were conducted in those two days: two were with vice-presidents, four were with upper level managers, and the remaining six were with supervisors and staff.

Seven interview sessions were conducted in May of 1985 when this researcher returned. There interviewees were selected differently, however. In preparation for the May visit, this researcher had requested the HRD to schedule specific individuals that were wanted, based on data that had been offered during the first two days. In three cases sessions were repeat interviewees from the previous round of interviews. In some instances, this researcher interviewed a repeat manager with four or five of her or his staff. One interview was with the boss of a previous interviewee.

For this third day at the insurance company, interviewees were selected because it was believed they might have more data relevant to the then emerging conceptual categories.

All interviewees at this organization were told about the nature of the study prior to the interview session. In doing so, this researcher emphasized the study's disassociation from the

company's administration. Interviewees were furthermore assured that names would not be used in any written form or oral communication and, in fact, any references to interviewees' comments will be made so that identification could not be inferred from the context. All interviewees were asked permission to tape record the interviews. Interviewees were also told how they could obtain a copy of the results. Specific arrangements were made to distribute the results to several managers and the HRD.

Entree into the other five Quiet Hour organizations was gained in a manner similar to what was done in the preliminary study. In some cases, the researcher asked first for the Personnel Director if she or he had not been interviewed earlier. In some cases, specific names were requested, these people having been referenced by interviewees in the preliminary study. In all, 11 phone interviews were conducted with personnel from these five companies. Of these, one was with a company president, five were with executives or upper managers, and five were with supervisors and staff. (A breakdown of interviewees by company appears in Appendix B.)

Observations

The researcher was granted a maximum of three full, not necessarily consecutive, days of observation at the nearby insurance company. During the mornings of those days, the researcher specifically observed employee behavior just prior to,

during, and after the Quiet Hour.

Company Documents

Documents and materials from all organizations were requested, although only two complied. (A breakdown of these documents appears in Appendix C.) Those two companies offered pages from their employee manuals regarding the Quiet Hour, clippings from local newspapers that publicized the Quiet Hour as a success story, and, in one case, corespondence between two executives regarding the Quiet Hour policy. One of the two organizations submitted copies of memos that had been sent from the company's HRD to personnel reminding them of Quiet Hour compliance.

Documents were often denied. One document in particular was highly desirable but not obtainable. It was one Quiet Hour manager's assessment inventory that asked his staff to rate the Quiet Hour's impact on their work. A copy of the inventory was requested several times and denied on each occasion.

Data from the Preliminary Study

Relevant data, currently existing as field notes from the interviews of the Preliminary Study, was used also.

C H A P T E R IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter the data collected from the interviews, observations and documents from the six organizations that participated in the study will be presented and discussed. This presentation will be accomplished in a three-part format. The first part is a description of the data sources and a brief explanation of how data were gathered and "worked" in accordance with the principles and procedures of grounded theory development. Part Two is a description of each of the six companies that participated in the study and a summary statement that identifies patterns of Quiet Hour implementation and use that were found among these six organizations. Part Three is an overview of all of the data that were collected and a presentation of three conceptual categories that emerged from the constant comparison process. Empirical data is offered with discussions for each of the categories.

Part One: Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected primarily from personnel at six organizations where the Quiet Hour either was currently being

practiced or once was practiced. Additional data were obtained from on-site observations at one of the six participating organizations and from documents that two of the organiations submitted for the study. A very small portion of the data came from Time Management trainers and consultants. All participants in the study were identified either from the literature or by suggestions from professionals in the field.

Data Sources: Interviews, Observations, Documents and the Time Management Trainers

The bulk of the data came from interviews with employees in Quiet Hour organizations. Fifty-seven different employees in six different organizations were interviewed for, on the average, 40 minutes each. Forty-six of these 57 interviews were conducted in person; the remainder were conducted by phone. A more detailed breakdown of the participants is offered in Appendix B.

Interviews were conducted with employees from various levels within each organization. In all, this researcher interviewed two company presidents, one division director, one executive vice president, two vice presidents, six upper-level managers, eight middle managers, five supervisors, and two executive secretaries. The remaining 30 interviewees were staff people: file clerks, typists, production people, "look-up" girls and mail carriers.

Four of these staff people were highly trained underwriters. In three cases, the interviewee was the person who initiated the Quiet Hour in that organization.

Observations were conducted at one organization only. Observations occurred in several ways. One way was the researcher's morning strolls through the company during the Quiet Hour. Once with the director of HRD and once alone, the researcher was able to note the level of noise during the Quiet Hour and overhear the nature of conversations. Observations were also made as the researcher moved through the company on her way to and from interviews that were conducted purposefully at the interviewee's desk. Oftentimes the prospective interviewee needed a few minutes to complete some task before the interview began, and the researcher had time to observe the general tone of work life.

The researcher also took advantage of opportunities to have breakfast and lunch with personnel from the HRD. Over meals and tea, the researcher indulged in off-the-record conversations, meanwhile noting the general ambiance of the organization in the casual atmosphere of the company cafeteria.

Documents were procured from two organizations. One company offered abundant documentation including local publicity on their Quiet Hour, numerous memos from the HRD to company employees regarding Quiet Hour, and a copy of the Personnel Manual which instructs employees on the Quiet Hour's rules and regulations. A

second company sent publicity also. They also sent a photo copy of their page of the Personnel Manual which details the Quiet Hour's rules and regulations. See Table in Appendix C for a breakdown of these documents.

A disappointingly small portion of the data came from the Time Management trainers and consultants. Of the four nationally prominent trainers who were contacted, only one allowed an extensive interview, and he talked mostly of Time Management in general and his belief in the Quiet Hour's value. It was this trainer who first coined the term "Quiet Hour" and is personally responsible for inspiring its institution in several of the organizations used in this study.

The other three trainers said little more than that they thought the Quiet Hour was a good idea, that they usually mentioned it in their training programs, but that they did not train specifically for the Quiet Hour. None of the three knew of any companies that practice the Quiet Hour.

Grounded Theory Development

Data for this study were collected and "worked" in accordance with the principles and procedures of grounded theory development, as offered by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and described in greater detail in Chapter III.

This researcher entered the field with a general query:

"How does the Quiet Hour work here?" along with a series of more specific questions which were designed to be used only in the event that the more general question failed to elicit adequate data. The intent was to proceed from the general to the specific, but that specifics would be determined more by what the field offered in the course of the investigation than by the researcher's pre-investigative notions of what might prove important.

The process of moving from the general question that framed the investigative effort to the more focused approach that would eventually produce conceptual categories was accomplished through what Glaser and Strass call "constant comparison analysis," a procedure which allows data to demonstrate their meaning as they are compared and contrasted with previously discovered data. This process is not one in which data are first collected and secondly analyzed. The constant comparison process calls for more of an on-going, inductive-deductive analytic process whereby the researcher alternately gathers data, makes analytic comparisons, and re-enters the field with a more refined line of inquiry.

The constant comparison process ends when a point of theoretical saturation has been reached and newly discovered data no longer contribute to the maturing of the conceptual category.

Following a description of the six participating organizations and their Quiet Hour policies in Part Two, a

general overview of all collected data is offered, as well as a presentation of the three conceptual categories that emerged from the data.

Part Two: The Companies

Since most of the substantive data came from the six companies that granted interviews, observation and/or documentation, it is worthwhile to offer a basic sketch of each company in order to afford a deeper understanding of where the data came from and to establish a context for the ensuing data presentation and discussions.

Company A

Company A was the home office of a nation-wide insurance company. Located in a moderately sized New England city, the office employed 1200 people.

Company A's Quiet Hour was introduced in conjunction with Flex Hours seven years ago and was in effect at the time that this data were gathered. This was a company-wide Quiet Hour policy and all employees, with the exception of the cafeteria staff, the mail room and the physical plant staff, were expected to observe the Quiet Hour. The HRD, which orchestrated the implementation of the Quiet Hour and was responsible for its

maintenance, had expressed dissatisfaction with the way the Quiet Hour was practiced.

Company A's Quiet Hour was the first hour of the work day. The morning Flex Hours allowed an employee to arrive at either 7:15, 7:45 or 8:30; the Quiet Hour was 7:15 to 8:15. Most employees worked the first shift and were in the office for the full Quiet Hour period. Those who came in at 7:45 were there for just the last half hour of the Quiet Hour.[12]

Rules for the Quiet Hour at Company A were: no calls (to either outside or inside the company) and no in-person visits. Phone calls coming in from the outside the company were accepted, although the 7:15 time reduced the number of calls by virtue of the fact that it wa so early in the day.

Quiet Hour implementation was motivated seven years ago by complaints from management that numerous morning meetings prevented them from organizing their day and doing important desk work. When the company decided, irrespective of the complaints about meetings, to institute a policy of Flex Hours, the Quiet Hour concept was brought forth and seen as a 'natural' partner for the new Flex Hour policy. It was thought that in addition to satisfying management's request for time at their desks, the

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[12] This company also had an afternoon Quiet Hour so that employees who came in at 8:30, and worked later in the day, got a Quiet Hour too. This Quiet Hour was rather ineffective, however, and tended to confuse, more than contribute to, this discussion. The afternoon Quiet Hour is therefore not included in the discussion.

Quiet Hour would reduce the anticipated disruption of employees' staggered arrival.

Company B

Company B was an engineering and manufacturing company that made thermal and chemical process systems. It was located in the mid-western United States and employed approximately 700 people.

Company B's Quiet Hour existed in the late 1970's and lasted for just one year. It was a company-wide policy practiced by all employees. A receptionist received all in-coming phone calls and took messages for employees to call back. No out-going calls or visits were allowed. This Quiet Hour too, was the first hour of the work day: from 8:00 to 9:00 AM.

Company B's Quiet Hour was initiated by the manager of Industrial Relations (IR) who had heard of the Quiet Hour concept at a Time Management seminar. He subsequently convinced top management that the Quiet Hour was "the biggest bang for the buck" and arranged for training for all managers and their secretaries. The remainder of the employees, who received no training at all, were told of the policy and informed of its purpose and use through memos.

Company B's Quiet Hour was considered successful while it lasted, but it ended as soon as the "driving force" (as he referred to himself) left the company for a better job. Of note

is the fact that this former manager of IR wrote the only Quiet Hour article that deals meaningfully with the implementation process.

Company C

Company C was a large insurance company located in a metropolitan area in the northeast United States. The Quiet Hour here was limited to just the Underwriting Department, a staff of fifteen people.

Company C's Quiet Hour began one and a half years ago and was, according to the department's manager, working well at the time of the data gathering. Unlike most of the other companies where the Quiet Hour was the first hour of the day, this Quiet Hour was from 10:00 to 11:00 AM. This hour was chosen so as to avoid the disruption of staggered arrivals created by Flex Hours and to allow the employees those first few hours to determine what work was deserving of the Quiet Hour's opportunity for concentration.

Out-going calls and in-person visits were not permitted. Phone calls coming in were deflected by a secretary who took call-back messages. (These underwriters were specifically urged to return calls promptly at 11:00.) Messages were allowed to come in via electronic mail, but underwriters were instructed not to respond to the message until after the Quiet Hour had ended.

Company C's Quiet Hour was initiated by the underwriters' manager who first came across the idea in the management literature. Believing that the Quiet Hour had "pay-off potential" -- that it would increase productivity and promote more carefully made decisions -- he appealed to his bosses for permission. This manager also "sounded out" many of the underwriters' clients in the field, informing them of a possible Quiet Hour and explaining what the benefits in productivity would mean in terms of improved services. This manager also sent memos to other departments within the organization, explaining the Quiet Hour and asking for cooperation for their proposed policy. When the response was satisfying, the Quiet Hour was instituted.

A year and a half after its inception, the underwriters were still the only Quiet Hour practitioners in the company.

Company D

Company D was a division of a large food processing corporation. Company D was located in the northeastern United States and employed approximately 150 people. Company D practiced a Quiet Hour for just one year in 1977. It began at the urging of the division president and lasted only as long as he was employed in that division.

Company D's rules were: no calls made, no visits allowed

and no meetings scheduled. Calls coming in were intercepted by a secretary who took call-back messages and was trained to say, "So-and-so is busy right now; he [sic] can call you back at 9:00."

This Quiet Hour was different from the others. Instead of a company-wide policy, or limiting the Quiet Hour to a particular department, this Quiet Hour was practiced, initially, by one level of the organizational hierarchy, and it then trickled down through the ranks.

The Quiet Hour at Company D first took hold in a Time Management training session that the president and his division staff attended together. There, the eleven top executives decided to adopt the Quiet Hour policy for themselves. Put into practice, the policy was a success. The company president grew to be an enthusiastic practitioner. Eventually, other employees did the same. A more detailed account of how the policy "trickled down" will be offered in a later portion of this chapter.

Company D also had offspring. One member of that top executive group in 1977 was promoted to the director position in another division of the corporation and instituted the policy for himself and his executive staff there. In a manner similar to what was done in the parent company, the practice was slowly trickling down through the ranks.

Company E

Company E was an insurance company of 250 employees where the Quiet Hour had been practiced successfully for approximately 25 years. Located in the Midwest, this company was the one most frequently recognized in the literature and noted for its long-term, satisfactorily maintained Quiet Hour policy.

The Quiet Hour at Company E was from 8:00 to 9:00 AM. Its rules were, according to the company manual: "avoid non-essential conversation," no out-going calls, and "avoid contacting other departments on routine matters." Exceptions, as listed, were: training of a new employee, field personnel needing assistance before leaving, in-coming calls, and urgent matters within the company. Important discussions were acknowledged as sometimes necessary, although employees were urged to speak softly and be considerate of others.

The Quiet Hour at Company E began in the 1960's, motivated by a top executive's desire to decrease the morning coffee-clutches that he considered counterproductive. "As the first hour of the day goes, so goes the day," began the instructions in the manual.

The Company E Quiet Hour was, at the time of this data gathering, securely integrated into the work day. It was "second nature," said the Personnel Director who claimed that there was no need for maintenance strategies. It was reported that new

employees, who often resented the policy at first, soon adjusted and that older employees who sometimes violated the rules were corrected gently.

Company F

Company F was a small credit and financial management company located in the western part of the United States. Company F employed 30 people who all worked in one large room with no space dividers. Company F had a Quiet Hour from 1975 to 1981.

The hour was 8:15 to 9:15, starting fifteen minutes after the start of the work day. In-coming calls were permitted, but talk and visits among employees was not allowed. Employees were instructed to "do your hardest project," in the words of the president's secretary, "and save your questions for a different time."

Company F's Quiet Hour was initiated by the company's president who had been influenced by the trainer at a Time Management seminar. Believing that the Quiet Hour would cut down on the morning chatter and get people going on the day, the president single-handedly instituted the policy. The staff were informed of its impending institution by way of the weekly newsletter, announcements in meetings, and a sign posted in the "break room." The rules and regulations were added to the

company manual.

The Quiet Hour was voted out after six years of relatively successful practice. Company F employees "rather unanimously" agreed that they did not want the policy. The president felt differently, but, recently impressed with the importance of democracy within the organization (He said he had just read Megatrends.), he agreed to abide by the group's decision. There had been no sentiment in favor of restoring the Quiet Hour since that time.

Summary Statement

The following discussion pulls together the data that describes the six participating companies that were presented above. This discussion compares and contrasts Quiet Hour practice as it was implemented in the different contexts and notes any interesting patterns of implementation and use that were drawn from the data.

From the information offered above, it can be seen that the sample size varied from a fifteen- person department to a 1200-employee company. Of the six, three were practicing the Quiet Hour at the time of this data gathering; three were former users of the policy. Three of the six were insurance companies.

The duration of the Quiet Hour policy varied greatly among

these six companies. The longest running Quiet Hour was in Company E where the policy had been in practice for 25 years. Two other companies had Quiet Hours for approximately seven years, and the remainder of the companies had the policy for one to two years.

The Quiet Hours of these six companies were generally located in the earlier part of the day; many were the very first hour. The exception was the one company that practiced their Quiet Hour in the late morning. Several years ago one company entertained the idea of instituting a second Quiet Hour which would come just after lunch time, although that had not come to pass. Another company had a second Quiet Hour in the late afternoon, but because of the way that Flex Hours worked, no employee was at work for both Quiet Hours in any one day.

Quiet Hour rules and regulations among the six companies were fairly consistent. All six required that conversations and movement be limited among employees. Three of the six allowed calls to come in from the outside. The three others did not allow in-coming calls; in these companies a telephone operator or a secretary answered the phone and took call-back messges. Modern technology impacted on the Quiet Hour in two of the six companies; electronic mail allowed unobtrusive communication to continue throughout the hour of quiet. Messages were transmitted from one computer terminal to another without disturbing colleagues.

The Quiet Hour was introduced into three of the six companies through Time Management training. In these three situations, upper management employees heard about the Quiet Hour and were convinced of its value as they participated in Time Management training seminars. In each case, one or a few high ranking managers subsequently took the idea back to the company and promoted the Quiet Hour adoption. Lest any undue significance be attributed to this scenario, it must be pointed out that these three situations were offered in the literature (Mackenzie and Lekan, 1977) by the Time Management trainer who administered all three seminars.

The Quiet Hour was introduced into the other three companies by different means. In two, it was a matter of some higher ranking manager finding the Quiet Hour idea in the literature and persuading his or her colleagues of its value. In one organization, the Quiet Hour was first discovered when the company was exploring the idea of Flex Hours and came upon a recommendation that the Quiet Hour and Flex Hours be implemented in a complementary fashion.

Part Three: The Data

Overview of the Data

Interviews

Beyond the initial introductions, interview sessions began with the interviewee giving a brief description of his or her job and the responsibilities that the job entailed. The interivewee was asked how long they had been with the company and whether they were working at the company at the time that the Quiet Hour was initiated. The first question relative to the implementation and use of the Quiet Hour came rather easily from that: "How does the Quiet Hour work here?"

Responses were usually of a general nature. Interviewees told what the rules and regulations were, as far as they knew them. They told how carefully the policy was practiced in their department and, where applicable, in the entire company. As the interview proceeded, in most cases, it soon became apparent whether the interviewee valued the policy or not. Employees who liked the Quiet Hour and found it useful usually said so and spoke about the Quiet Hour with enthusiasm. Other were slightly cautious and said that they liked it but had reservations about its value or the way it was practiced. Some interviewees were quite honest about their dislike for the Quiet Hour. Most interviewees fell into either of the first two categories, but

approximately ten of the 53 interviewees fell into the third.

Those interviewees who used the Quiet Hour were rather vague about what exactly they did with the time. Some talked about writing memos and preparing for meetings. Only one person said that she organized the day in that hour. Most users stated that they generally did desk work during the Quiet Hour, meaning that they did miscellaneous paper work that they would have done anyway. The only difference between this hour and any other hour of the day was the absense of interruptions.

It was disappointing, yet not surprising, that so little data evolved with respect to what Quiet Hour users actually did during the hour of quiet. It is a commonly acknowledged phenomena among Time Management consultants that people are generally unable to accurately report what they do with their time; Time Logs, a standard tool for Time Management assessment, were created for just that reason. This study tried repeatedly to get permission to have employees keep Time Longs for the Quiet Hour over a period of time, but companies refused that kind of access. In the absense of Time Logs, the data regarding time use during the Quiet Hour were scant, as well as suspect.

Employees who did not like the Quiet Hour were able to offer a variety of reasons for their sentiments. In summary, some simply disliked being controlled; they resented the idea of being told how to spend their time. Some felt that the policy implied condescension. In the words of one secretary, "It's

kindergarten-ish." Some disliked the loss of social interaction; they enjoyed chatting with their fellow employees in the morning and resented having to give that up. Most of the non-users, however, simply believed that they could not do their work without interaction; they usually felt strongly that the Quiet Hour made them less efficient, not more. Some managers, furthermore, resented being forced into a role of "the heavy." "I just won't force it on my people," said one manager. "I like to treat them as though they chose to come to work here."

Those who liked the Quiet Hour had a variety of reasons for their sentiments also. Most appreciated the increase in the amount of work they could do without the interruptions. Some simply felt better about the measure of discipline that the Quiet Hour brought to the work -- for themselves, and in the case of managers, for their subordinates. One manager in particular, said that he thought it forced his subordinates to answer some of their own questions as opposed to running to him for the answers.

Almost all of the interviewees had been with the company when the Quiet Hour was first instituted. (This researcher requested interviewees who fell into this category.) Interviewees at the lower end of the heirarchy were usually unable to remember how it was started. Most remembered the introduction as simply being told to do it one day.

Interviewees at the upper end of the company's hierarchy were more likely to offer more information about the

implementation process. In many cases, they had been near the people who made the decision to institute the Quiet Hour policy. This researcher interviewed three people who themselves were responsible for promoting its adoption.

Considerations of training were mentioned but not offered to any significant degree. In several of the organizations, Time Management/Quiet Hour training was given to the upper managers, and in one case their secretaries, and the remainder of the staff were simply told to do it. One personnel director suggested that her organization had made a grave error in not providing Quiet Hour training for any of their employees.

A significant amount of data were offered that addressed the question about whether some jobs are more suited to the Quiet Hour than others. Much of this kind of discussion was prompted by people, who, in defending their inability to make use of the policy, said that their job simply did not fit the Quiet Hour concept or practice. They could not work without interacting.

One job that was cited repeatedly as being unfit for the Quiet Hour was sales and marketing. The more frequently offered sentiment was that sales and marketing people would be encumbered by the Quiet Hour. In one company, for example, an employee said that sales people needed that first hour to talk to their bosses before going out into the field. It was also argued that sales people ought never be unavailable to a caller. A contrasting idea was expressed by an executive who offered that sales people

just think the Quiet Hour does not work for them. He claimed that it is rather a matter of self-discipline. He believed that the sales job would benefit greatly from an hour of planning and thinking but that sales people are crisis-prone and were more reluctant to take the hour of quiet more because of their personal style than because of the nature of their work.

Which jobs suited the Quiet Hour and which did not proved to be a rather controversial issue and sometimes sparked emotions. Lack of suitability was the defense of many non-users who were offended by the implication that it is just a matter of self-discipline.

Comments were also offered about the suitability of a company to Quiet Hour adoption. Not all kinds of companies, it was assumed, would be rendered more productive by an hour of quiet in the morning. Noting especially that three of the six sample organizations were insurance companies, this researcher asked frequently what features of a company might make it a good Quiet Hour user.

Responses indicated that organizations that were "people intensive" should find the Quiet Hour of value. "It's good for people whose day is driven by constant interface," said one executive. It works with "large clerical operations," said another.

One area of data that arose quite unexpectedly indicated that there were several Quiet Hour variations that existed in the

work world. These policies were adaptations of the literature's version and were adjusted to suit the organization's (or group's) particular needs.

One such variation was called "Phone-free days" and had been initiated by one department of underwriters in a large insurance company. "Phone-free days" meant that two days per week members of this department took no phone calls (other than personal ones) and used the block of undisturbed time to do research and careful desk work. Here in a department where concentrated effort and quiet thinking were highly cost-effective, a policy had been created to protect the employees from distractions.

Another organization uncovered in the course of this study had a Quiet Day on an as-needed basis. According to one secretary, "Whenever the work starts to pile up, the company takes a day's break from the phone." Internal communication was permitted, but calls coming in from the outside were received by one receptionist who took messages.

Documents

Documentation from the two companies who submitted papework provided little data. Both companies offered the page from their employees' manual which informed people of the Quiet Hour policy and its rules and regulations. Other documentation included memos from the HRD to personnel reminding them that the Quiet Hour policy was of value. These memos were meant as gentle reprimands; they were efforts to maintain compliance.

Both companies submitted articles from local newspapers that exclaimed the Quiet Hour policy. All of the articles indicated that the Quiet Hour was innovative and successful.

Observations

Observations at the one organization yielded a few bits of data relevant to the question of Quiet Hour implmentation and use. It was observed, for example, that a department's physical juxtaposition played a role in the success of its Quiet Hour policy. Departments that were located near public places in the building were subjected to noise over which they had little control. Departments located near an elevator, for example, were intermittently disturbed by the voices of people waiting to board or people stepping off the elevator. Other departments that were positioned between two other departments were disturbed by the voices and movement of personnel who had to travel through their corridors in order to get to the area beyond.

Observations also yielded data relevant to Quiet Hour signs. In almost all departments where the Quiet Hour was practiced, signs were posted that reminded personnel of the policy. Some signs took the form of clocks; the hands of the clock pointed to the time when the department could resume interaction. These clock signs were intended primarily to inform would-be interrupters from outside the department. Other signs were simply-stated reminders intended primarily to remind department personnel of the policy. These were posted throughout the

department as well as on the periphery.

As data were collected and subjected to the constant comparison analysis, it became clear that some areas relevant to the question of Quiet Hour implementation and use emerged in greater abundance. When that happened, this researcher went back into the field with questions focused on that particular area in an effort to more clearly determine its properties and parameters. Areas that developed to a point of theoretical saturation were refined and worked until they earned the distinction of conceptual category. What follows is an account of three conceptual categories that developed from this research effort.

Conceptual Categories

Three conceptual categories evolved from the data that bear meaningfully on Quiet Hour implementation and use. They were: 1.) management's role in Quiet Hour implementation and use; 2.) user's personal discomfort with aspects of the Quiet Hour practice, such individual accessibility, the need for assertiveness, and the flexibility of the policy's rules and regulations; and 3.) the feasibility of the "pocket Quiet Hour" -- a Quiet Hour practiced by an isolated group(s) in the context of non-practitioners.

Conceptual Category #1: Management's Role

One of the most emphatically made and consistently offered kinds of comments in all of the interviews conducted in this research effort concerned the importance of management's role in the Quiet Hour's survival over time. No matter who originated the idea and made it policy, interviewees stated repeatedly that the key to keeping the Quiet Hour a practiced policy beyond the first stages of implementation was really in the hands of bosses who, overtly and covertly, contributed critically to its success or its failure. In the words of one upper manager, "If you get a management group that doesn't pay any attention to it, it doesn't go."

Data suggested several ways in which the boss's role affects the Quiet Hour policy: a.) some one person -- near the top of

the organizational hierarchy -- has to want it badly and push for its success; b.) executives, managers and supervisors have to role model its proper use; and c.) managers and supervisors, have to be willing to accept responsibility for maintaining discipline among his or her subordinates. Data to support each is offered below.

Public Endorsement

The Quiet Hour has to have some one person -- at or near the top of the organizational hierarchy -- who believes in its value, wants it practiced faithfully and is noticeably committed to the success of the policy. The Quiet Hour has to become closely associated with a personality who is respected and obeyed.

In two companies where the Quiet Hour was highly successful, it was the top executives who praised its value and promoted its use. One called it "the biggest bang for the buck," referring to the Quiet Hour as it stood amidst the array of Time Management strategies that he had been exposed to.

In some cases, a Quiet Hour's success depended rather dramatically upon its close association with its strongest proponent. That fact was demonstrated in two sitations where the Quiet Hour thrived only as long as its executive-level promoter worked in the company. In both cases, when he left, so did the policy. On hearing that "his" Quiet Hour policy had withered away after his departure, one of the above executives said:

> It probably died because its father left...you have to have a sponsor...it has to have a driving force.

From the other, who was also surprised to discover that his Quiet Hour had died after he left:

> You really have to have the head of the unit want to do it. If he doesn't want to do it, it isn't going to happen.

In yet another instance, the president of the company was the Quiet Hour implementor and the policy lasted six years.

Supportive evidence stated from the opposite perspective came from an employee who disregarded the Quiet Hour policy, in part, because the top executive demonstrated no commitment. In this company where the Quiet Hour was a company-wide policy, but compliance was uneven, the employee noted the lack of enforcement from high up in the executive ranks. The company president, who made it a practice to issue a public statement in favor of other policies, had never said anything about the Quiet Hour. This employee, when asked if it made a diffeence, said:

> It probably would make a difference [in my willingness to comply with the policy]. I think that if it were that important, he would have come out with a statement.

Exemplary Practice

Bosses who practice the Quiet Hour become a role model for all employees under their supervision. They convey two kinds of messages: one, about how one works quietly for an hour, ie, how

one uses that time effectively; and two, about adherence to the rules and regulations. Bosses who work diligently at their desks for the entire hour and neither invite nor initiate interruptions demonstate to their subordinates the "right" way to use the Quiet Hour.

Several managers expressed their awareness that they set the standard for their subordinates. Some stated that they felt the responsibility that role modeling implies. One manager told how she occasionally must call a meeting of her three supervisors 15 minutes before the Quiet Hour is over. The four of them meet in her office, which is set apart from the other desks. They are visible to the others, however, and in a few minutes time, the quiet on the floor has been broken.

> It's like a signal...it's permission that everybody else can talk too. I keep thinking [when this happens] 'I can't fault them when I'm the one who started this whole thing.'

From another manager:

> As a department head, it's very easy for me to interrupt someone, to assume that what I'm working on right now is so important that I can go in and interrupt somebody. It would be very easy to be presumptuous about it...but that isn't right and that's where it goes astray.

From a middle manager, speaking about his boss:

> I know not to disturb him [during the Quiet Hour]. His head is down...he's working and he doesn't invite any interruptions. I've seen people approach his doorway (His office has glass walls); he looks up, but the expression on his face tells

> you to make it quick. After that happens a few times, you don't go back soon again.

From an upper manager:

> I practice the Quiet Hour too. I think that if I'm gonna' ask people to abide by the Quiet Hour, I've got to demonstrate that I'm gonna' do it too. Its rarely that someone will come into my office before 8:15.

From another:

> It's not like a lot of training programs that can survive without a real commitment as long as there's a budget...with the Quiet Hour, top management has to DO it. They have to participate in it and DO it.

From a manager:

> I'm a big backer of the Quiet Hour. I'm very careful to look at the clock before I go out on the floor and ask somebody to do something. I think it just becomes a mindset -- to develop a habit of checking the clock before you do something that could have waited.

Maintenance Responsibilities

In addition to being a role model, bosses whose Quiet Hour policy is a success accept some responsibility for maintaining discipline. Despite whatever endorsement comes from farther up the organizational hierarchy, it is the supervisors and managers, those physically present to the staff, that see violations occur and must know how to handle sometimes delicate situations.

Managers often told specifically what they did to maintain the Quiet Hour; some emphasized the necessity of "keeping it

tight" and some discussed their philosophical approach to discipline in general.

From a manager:

> You have to do that [maintain discipline] carefully; you don't want people to feel they're being watched over all the time. If they're doing it quietly and occasionally, its not a bother; but if they're noisy, and they're bothering people around them frequently, then that deserves some kind of attention.

From a supervisor:

> We get to the point where every so often we still have to remind people that 'This is a quiet hour.' It's only natural that the tendency when you come in in the morning is to tell everybody what happened the night before...but it never stops there -- it goes on and on...

One supervisor in a service department that decided to practice the Quiet Hour, despite the fact that many of the departments they service do not, explained one of her more successful strategies:

> When somebody [from another department] asks us for a folder, we get it for them and then later I go back and speak to that person's supervisor. [I say] 'Would you remind your girls [sic] that we observe the Quiet Hour?' and they say 'Oh, sure.' I don't like my girls to have to be the heavies.

One manager said that rarely he found a chronic offender, but when he did, the matter was handled in the weekly meeting. There the matter of Quiet Hour violation would be mentioned in a general way so that the offender would get the point.

Occasionally he also sent around memos about Quiet Hour compliance.

"Top management has to police it," said one manager. "We're trying to be a little 'hang-toughish' on this thing; that's the only way you're gonna' get there," said another. "It gets sloppy," said a company president, "You gotta' stay on it."

Further Support for Management's Influence

The three points above are underscored by data that indicated that bosses who do not want the Quiet Hour or who 'adjust' the rules to suit their individual, and usually immediate, needs undermine the policy and prevent successful practice.

One situation that illustrated this phenomena occurred in a staff where two supervisors agreed that the Quiet Hour, despite the fact that it was company policy, would not work in their particular departments. The majority of their staff believed that too. At upper management's request, a poll was taken; fourteen of the twenty-one staff members did not want the Quiet Hour and were glad it was not enforced. A few years ago, however, when the previous supervisors liked and enforced the Quiet Hour, the majority of the staff had sentiments that were more in line with those supervisors.

One common practice that was found to severely undermine the Quiet Hour's success was for company executives and managers to take advantage of their "captive" subordinates during the Quiet

Hour. The data indicate that some executives and managers frequently called their subordinate during the hour, knowing that they were at their desks and that their phones were free.

In one company in particular, there were repeated complaints from the subordinates; they resented the "double standard," as well as the disruptiveness of the call. The culprit executive, however, (who routinely arrived at work an hour before everyone else to get his own personal Quiet Hour) defended his practice:

> After 8:30 my day is taken care of with a lot of other things. I don't get to make many calls -- much less receive them. If I wait until everybody else is into the day, we do nothing but play phone tag.

From a personnel director:

> The group that abuses Quiet Hour as much as any other are management people. Its just a time when you can get another manager at his or her desk.

No situation better dramatized the power that management's role had in the Quiet Hour implementation and use than what happened in one company under study. Here the top executives decided together that they would put into practice a Quiet Hour for themselves. They trained their secretaries to take calls, and from 8:00 to 9:00 AM they made themselves unavailable. Their subordinates were unable to get in touch with them, however, and according to one of the top executives:

> It soon became apparent that no meetings were going to be held and a lot of important people were not going to be available.

Instead of getting frustrated, the subordinates adopoted the policy themselves. Their subordinates, in turn, did the same. Eventually the Quiet Hour spread from the original eleven top executives to 70 employees in the division.

Conceptual Category #2: Personal Discomfort

Data indicated that there were aspects of Quiet Hour practice that created personal discomfort for Quiet Hour users and contributed significantly to poor Quiet Hour practice. Much of the difficulty had to do with employees' perceptions of their professional responsibilities and the social context of the work environment. Practitioners and non-practitioners alike expressed moral misgivings about the state of inaccessability that the Quiet Hour demands. Many were also displeased with the assertive behaviors required to deal with potential violators. Some employees expressed concern about emergencies and violations and saw the Quiet Hour as inflexible, and therefore not workable. Data relative to these assertions are presented below.

Unavailability: A Professional Concern

Data indicated that one of the most troubling aspects of Quiet Hour practice came from employees' perceptions that they cannot cut themselves off from the rest of the company without seriously hindering their productivity. Many employees working in situations where they were urged to comply with the Quiet Hour policy did not practice it because they believed that their job would not allow it. Even employees who said they would love to

have an hour of undisturbed time to get their desk work done and who complained about the frequency with which they were interrupted, would not take the Quiet Hour. They believed that they did not have the right to deny others their services and they needed to be able to ask questions and consult with colleagues at will.

From one non-practitioner:

> If somebody comes along with a problem and they say they want to look up something, we can't turn them away and say 'I'm sorry, I'm working on this report; come back tomorrow.' I mean you just can't do that. People have crises all the time and they need us. We're the only ones with the answers.

From another non-practitioner:

> As much as we complained about meeting, in order for me to do projects, we have to contact people in the user area...When the Quiet Hour started, we were told you couldn't meet with anybody or you couldn't call anybody until 8:30 in the morning. People sat at their desks and said 'I gotta' see somebody, but I'm not supposed to.'

From a non-practicing supervisor:

> These girls [sic] couldn't work if they couldn't ask questions. They'd have to just sit there and twiddle their thumbs until 8:15. That would be really stupid.

This highly subjective matter is not easily addressed. Interviewees indicated many contradictory sentiments. Different people with similar jobs argued for and against the Quiet Hour on

the basis of availability. Within one company, for example, there were two service departments whose supervisors did and did not practice the Quiet Hour for the very same reason: "We're a service department."

The non-practicing supervisor said:

> It's kind of hard to keep the Quiet Hour in this department because we have a lot of outside contact...with different departments. We can't very well say to the operator, 'Well, we can't take this call because its our Quiet Hour.' Especially in the service area.

From the practicing supervisor:

> We need the morning hour [Quiet Hour] to get prepared. We can't service other departments very well if we aren't prepared ourselves.

Even within a single department there were contradictory perspectives. One supervisor, who does not like, nor practice, the Quiet Hour despite the company policy, believed that her staff members would be rendered helpless without the freedom to ask questions at will. Yet one member of that same staff who worked there years ago when the previous supervisor liked and enforced the Quiet Hour, told a different story. When the previous supervisor enforced it, everybody held their questions. It was "sometimes inconvenient," she said, but "worth it."

The subjectivity, even delicacy, of this issue is further demonstrated in repeated statements -- usually from upper management -- that the employees' beliefs that they could not be

inaccessible for an hour and still be productive was a matter of poor self-discipline and a lack of commitment to the policy, not a matter of the job itself.

From a top executive:

> I think normal [sic] people in most business environments could plan their intra-company contact...it takes some self-discipline and that's the hardest kind of discipline in the world.

From a manager:

> What can't wait an hour? If it's, 'Gotta' do it right now,' then that means that the person has procrastinated.

From a top executive:

> We had a few [people who said they couldn't cut themselves off for an hour], but our retort to that was that, except for a very few jobs, most people can block some time together and be productive. The only people that really have to have constant interface would be a receptionist at the front desk, or someone who had a job like handing out tools.

And from another manager:

> If you believe in it, you'll schedule yourself around it.

From another manager:

> Marketing had some trouble living with the Quiet Hour, but that has more to do with the 'crisis orientation' of the people there than it does with the job.

Some interviewees tempered this position, claiming that different

jobs did lend themselves in different degrees to the isolation that the Quiet Hour requires. Again, however, the bottom line was that it is possible.

From a supervisor who practiced the Quiet Hour:

> I came from an area where the main function was balancing accounts...and you'd get to a point where you didn't understand how something affected your account. [In that situation] you really couldn't go in [without asking questions]. That wouldn't happen every day unless the person is fairly new and not totally trained on the job.

Another manager whose department practiced the Quiet Hour said that the basic Quiet Hour concept was applicable to all jobs, although some of the specific strategies lend themselves more or less to different jobs and functions. When asked whether everyone, regardless of their need for the Quiet Hour, should be asked to practice it, however, she said:

> I don't think it hurts anyone...to try to work by yourself for an hour.

Unavailability: A Social Concern

In addition to the discomfort that stems from perceptions of professional responsibilities, interviewees often expressed a belief that the Quiet Hour was in conflict with their notion of social/cooperative behaviors that work life implies. They believed that it was socially incorrect to refuse help to a colleague or client or to reduce amenities to a nod and a smile.

Said one clerical worker:

> When I come in, I know I have a tendency to say 'Hi.' In fact, when I was a supervisor, I felt...ya' gotta' say 'Hi' to your people. I mean you can't come in like a stone face and just sit, so I would say 'Hi' and ask them how they are.

A top manager pointed out the social dynamics of the Quiet Hour in her company:

> The people within this company are extremely cooperative and very helpful. If someone called you and [asked you to get them some figures], you would probably say 'Yes,' even if it meant putting something you were doing away...I think it's become a habit and I think it's become part of the culture to be cooperative. But being cooperative doesn't always mean being thoughtful of someone else's needs. It's self-discipline -- you can ask for cooperation at the appropriate time.

Problems with Assertiveness

The Quiet Hour policy demands that practitioners occasionally handle situations that require assertive behaviors. Interviewees in this study often expressed discomfort with that aspect. The personnel director in one Quiet Hour company speculated that very few people know how to graciously turn a would-be interrupter away. A clerk, who commented that she herself said, "This is my Quiet Hour and I'm really busy; will you come back a little later?" admitted that not many of her co-workers would say something like that. Several employees talked about having to be the "heavy" and not liking it.

One manager of a staff that practiced the Quiet Hour

successfully said that he encouraged his staff to be assertive with all people, including himself:

> [I tell them they] can tell the boss to get out. I tell 'em , 'If I come over during the Quiet Hour, you throw me out. Say, Thanks, but I can't talk to you now.'

Managers said that they tried to spare their staff the difficulty of having to turn someone away. The clock signs in many Quiet Hour departmants were one way of sparing employees personal awkwardness. Several managers said outright that they themselves protected their staffs by meeting persistent intruders head-on. One superisor in particular had developed a policy to prevent interpersonal mishaps. She instructed her staff to grant an intruder their request, but she herself subsequently spoke to the intruder's supervisor regarding the matter.

Perceived Inflexibility of the Rules

Closely associated with the issue of assertiveness is another difficult aspect of Quiet Hour implementation and use: that of flexibility within the rules and regulations. Many employees in Quiet Hour situations expressed discomfort with the fact that the rules and regulations disallowed valid "violations." Many of these interviewees were non-practitioners who, instead of taking the liberty to make situation-specific decisions, refused to use the Quiet Hour at all on the grounds that it was too rigid.

This discomfort, which seemed to stem from a lack of understanding, was illustrated by comments such as these:

> [The Quiet Hour won't work] because you've got your telephone calls coming through from outside from people who are ill and you don't want to wait until a quarter past 8 when somebody should have been here at quarter past 7.

One employee said she did not like the Quiet Hour because if the computer system crashed, she could not call anybody to check out the situation.

This difficulty is perhaps better illustrated by the comments of better Quiet Hour users who were willing to make situation-specific decisions within the context of the Quiet Hour. Many employees, managers especially, mentioned sometimes having to call a meeting during the Quiet Hour or infrequently accepting a call, or having to phone a colleague during the Quiet Hour. What stood out in these comments from managers was: 1.) that they initiated "violations" infrequently and only with careful thought beforehand and 2.) that they accepted the inevitability of violations and regarded them as a small price to pay for the greater benefit of the Quiet Hour.

Several comments illustrated this phenomennon. From one company president:

> Once in a while you get somebody who's hot and bothered [calling in], so you have to talk to them...but that's a rare event.

From a manager:

> I find myself when I do have to occasionally 'violate' it, if you will; I find myself saying such things as 'Sorry to interrupt your Quiet Hour' to let people know that I know about it.

From another manager:

> If someone calling in really wants to get through, I take the call myself...In over a year, it's happened about four times. That's not bad.

From another manager who practices the Quiet Hour carefully:

> I'm glad sometimes to get a call from another department [during Quiet Hour]. Those are important -- I wouldn't want to wait an hour to find out some important piece of information... Emergencies just don't happen all that frequently.

Conceptual Category #3: The Pocket Quiet Hour

Data revealed the existence of what this researcher named "pocket Quiet Hours," a phenomenon whereby a singular department or group of employees adopted and practiced a Quiet Hour policy despite the fact that the employees around them did not. In these departments and groups, the Quiet Hour worked surprisingly well and indicated that, while it may be preferable for an entire company to practice a Quiet Hour, it was possible for the Quiet Hour to survive among just those employees who needed it and wanted it.

This is not to imply that the pocket Quiet Hour policy is trouble-free. Data indicated that it was an inconvenience for

those who did not practice the policy and there were times when non-practitioners, especially those within the company, resented the unavailability of the practitioners. The assertion here is simply that pocket Quiet Hours are a desirable alternative when a company-wide policy is inadvisable.

The first clue that pocket Quiet Hours could be successful came from a company where the Quiet Hour policy was company-wide in name only. In reality, only about half of the company's departments adhered to the policy while the other half did not. The company's HR Division assumed this was a problem; the policy was only 50% effective. Users at the company, however, perceived the situation differently. While some admitted that more uniform compliance would reduce interruptions more so, a surprisingly large number of interviewees said that they thought there was little difficulty with the fact that some departments practiced the Quiet Hour and some departments did not. From an executive vice-president:

> I don't see any problems with the way it is now. Departments where it works do it and if it does not suit or if the manager doesn't like it, they don't do it. What's the problem?

A clerk:

> I don't like it and we don't wanna' do it. I like talking within my own department. But I'm glad the rest of 'em do -- we don't get so many calls first thing [in the morning].

Employees in several of the companies told how everyone knew who

did and did not practice the Quiet Hour. Departments known for their strict adherence were seldom disturbed by non-practitioners.

From an upper manager:

> Even the Union people [who didn't practice the Quiet Hour] respect the Quiet Hour. They wouldn't bother us in the Industrial Relations Department between 8 and 9 in the morning.

From a manager:

> Oh, sometimes they (outsiders who can't get access to us) grumble -- they even tease us. I think they're jealous.

From a clerk, impressed with the Underwriting Department's strict adherence:

> You don't call the underwriters.

Some Examples

This investigation disclosed three pocket Quiet Hours in particular that enjoyed success and were worthy of mention. One was a service department in a company where the Quiet Hour policy was company-wide, but unevenly practiced; the second was a staff of underwriters in a company where they have adopted a Quiet Hour policy just for themselves. The third was a rather unique pocket Quiet Hour in that it was instituted (originally) for a particular segment of the organizational hierarchy, not a lone department. What follows is a sketch of these three.

The service department, called Communication Services (or

affectionately, "Comm Services") consisted of twelve young women, just out of high school, and their supervisor. Their job was to stamp and deliver mail to the six or seven departments that they serviced and to operate the central filing system that served all of those departments. Comm Services was a caged-in area located in the center of the floor, an arrangement that purposefully made them easily accessible to the 130 employees for whom they provided services. None of the departments which Comm Services served observed the Quiet Hour.

Comm Services had not always practiced the Quiet Hour either. Up until a year prior to this research, they had not adhered to the company policy; they distributed mail and handed out folders any time of the work day. The arrangement was satisfactory to everyone involved.

One day, however, in a Quality Circle meeting, the Comm Services staff, under the leadership of their supervisor, decided that they needed and wanted the Quiet Hour. They decided that the hour of undisturbed time would be a benefit. They made clock signs to inform their would-be interrupters and started to practice the Quiet Hour.

This group of practitioners expressed their satisfaction with their policy. They claimed that the hour allowed them time to get the mail stamped and prepared for delivery early in the day and that they used the hour to tidy up the files from the previous afternoon. They expressed an appreciation for the

psychological relief as well. "It's great to not have somebody jumpin' on ya' first thing in the morning," said one member of the staff. The supervisor used the time to plan her day.

The supervisor claimed that the Quiet Hour had created esprit de corps among the staff. "The Quiet Hour is a time when they are all working together," she said. "There's a sense of satisfaction in having completed so much work in the very first hour of the day," members of the staff asserted.

In a second company, the Underwriting Department was a staff of fifteen whose manager instituted the Quiet Hour a year and a half prior to the collection of these data. This staff was the only department in the company that practiced the Quiet Hour.

This Quiet Hour was implemented because the manager wanted to provide his underwriters with the opportunity to do the research and thinking that would help them do better work. "They make a lot of serious decisions," said the manager. The department was also plagued with a back log of work and the manager saw the Quiet Hour as a possible strategy for catching up and keeping up. Instituting the Quiet Hour in this department was an indication that "somebody recognizes the implications of their job," said the manager. For these underwriters, the Quiet Hour was a gift and an acknowledgement of their worth.

Like the young women in Comm Services, the Underwriters discussed the Quiet Hour before it was implemented. The manager explained the policy, the concept behind it and allowed the staff

to digest the idea before it was made into policy.

According to the manager at the time of data collection, this staff of underwriters was highly enthusiastic about their Quiet Hour. The manager spoke repeatedly of the "spin-off" effect and the increased output. The staff, he said, would agree. They have not had a back log of work since the Quiet Hour began.

The third situation of interest is in the company where the Quiet Hour began among just the top eleven executives and spread to seven times that number of employees, or half the company's work force. Here a pocket Quiet Hour was not defined by department, but by rank.

The Quiet Hour in this situation began at the suggestion of the company president. It was discussed by the eleven members of the executive staff and adopted by consensus. The "spread" occurred when subordinates of the eleven found they had no access to their bosses and concluded that it was the ideal time to isolate themselves also. The practice filtered down through the hierarchy, being picked up by employees who saw the Quiet Hour's advantages and found it was suitable to synchronize their workday with their bosses'. The filtering ended at a level when, according to one of the original eleven, "it stopped being appropriate." He believed that there were certain jobs and certain individuals that had less need for the Quiet Hour.

He asserted:

> The need probably isn't as great as you get down deep into the organization. I don't think [those] people have the same pressure on their calendars for meetings [as we in the management ranks do].

That executive now directs a division of his own and has begun the same phenomena. A year and a half ago when he took this latest promotion, he started practicing a Quiet Hour by himself. At the time of his interview, he reported that six or seven of his executive staff had also adopted it. He said that he expected to see it filter down in a manner similar to what happened in his former division.

Summary

This chapter presented data relevant to Quiet Hour implementation and use in the American workplace. Most of the data were gathered from interviews with employees at six organizations where the Quiet Hour was, or had been, a policy. Additional data were collected from on-site observations at one organization; documents from two organizations were utilized as well.

The major findings of this study were presented as three conceptual categories which indicated aspects of success, as well as areas of difficulty for Quiet Hour implementation.

Data related to the first conceptual category indicated the

critical nature of management's role in maintaining a Quiet Hour policy. Data further refined the nature of that role and indicated that management could do three things to influence success: a.) publicly support the policy, b.) be an exemplary practitioner, and c.) take on the responsibility of discipline among subordinates.

Data related to the second conceptual category indicated the difficulties that practitioners have in living with the rules and regulations. Despite the fact that almost everyone interviewed expressed a desire for an undisturbed hour every day, all could not live comfortably with the Quiet Hour policy.

This study revealed some aspects of that difficulty. For either professional or personal reasons, employees were problematically uncomfortable with the idea of being unavailable to people who needed them for one hour of the day. Employees further indicated their discomfort at having to fend off would-be intruders. Others disliked the Quiet Hour policy because they believed that it was too rigid.

The concept of pocket Quiet Hours and their surprising success constituted the third conceptual category. Data relevant to this area indicated that a group of people who needed and wanted the hour of quiet could institute the policy for themselves, despite the fact that their colleagues did not. Furthermore, as indicated by one of the situations described above, a pocket Quiet Hour had the capability of spreading

through the organization, serving the needs of those who desired what it offered.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Data

The purpose of this study was to deepen the professional understanding of how the Quiet Hour is implemented in the American workplace. This study attempted to discover features of the Quiet Hour implementation process that bear favorably and problematically on the Quiet Hour's success, and in doing so, allow relevant bits of Quiet Hour theory to emerge. Believing that the Quiet Hour concept is a viable one, this study hoped to contibute to the eventual creation of training, diagnostic, and intervention strategies that might make successful Quiet Hours occur more frequently.

Quiet Hour implementation to date has been a rather arbitrary effort. In most cases with which this researcher is familiar, someone in an organization latched on to the idea and instituted the policy with little or no implementation strategy. Because the Quiet Hour is so simple in concept, it has been easy to assume that its implementation is equally uncomplicated.

This study uncovered three features of Quiet Hour implementation that bear significantly on the implementation process. First, it discovered that the organization's management and executive level employees must be overtly in favor of the

idea, be willing to practice it themselves in exemplary fashion and be willing to take on the responsibility of "discipline" and maintenance with their subordinates' adherence to the Quiet Hour. This study indicated that no matter how large or small a work group the Quiet Hour embraces, the executive at the top, and the managers and supervisors who are most visible to the work group, carry a responsibility that the other employees do not. The acceptance of this responsibility is a critical prerequisite for successful Quiet Hour implementation.

The second feature identified through this study is that much of the reluctance to practice the Quiet Hour on the part of those, mostly non-management, employees is based largely on their personal discomfort with being unavailable to colleagues and clients. This study discovered that employees in the ranks below the management level (although some managers and supervisors can be included) failed to practice the Quiet Hour because they did not understand how it fit with their perceived responsibilities as a human being in a social context and as employees with obligations to be available to other people.

The third major discovery of this study was the surprising success of what this researcher has dubbed "pocket" Quiet Hours, a practice whereby one, relatively small group of people decides to have a Quiet Hour policy in the context of a much larger group of non-practitioners. It was further discovered that pocket Quiet Hours need not necessarily be restricted to a group of

people in the same department; one of the most successful Quiet Hours of this study was among a group of top executives who had in common their rank.

The pocket Quiet Hour concept opens the door to all those small departments who need undisturbed time to do good work but are unable to convince the rest of the organization to do it too. The pocket Quiet Hours of this study indicated that as long as those affected by the Quiet Hour are informed of the policy -- or better yet, convinced of its benefits -- the practice works with little difficulty.

Implications for Quiet Hour Implementation

Quiet Hour Implementation Principles

Data from this study have shaped several principles that bear meaningfully on Quiet Hour implementation and use. They are as follows:

1.) No Exceptions

It is NOT unreasonable to expect every employee (There are some exceptions, but they are few.) to practice the Quiet Hour. In the way that it is not unreasonable to expect that people come to work on time most days, this researcher now believes that it is no less outrageous to expect that everybody work quietly for an hour every day. Aside from the people whose job it is to receive visitors (a receptionist, for example) or take in-coming

calls (a switchboard operator, for example), everyone in a participating organization or unit should at least try it for a period of time.

2.) Give It Time

It takes time to get used to the Quiet Hour. The Quiet Hour concept is simple, but the practice is very unfamiliar to many people in an organization. People need time to adjust to an innovation that touches their personal styles of working. The Quiet Hour cannot be implemented over night; it must be a gradual process that takes into consideration the fact that human beings need time to make changes.

3.) Adequate Training

Training would prevent a great portion of the Quiet Hour's implementation difficulties. Much of the troubled areas that were identified by interviewees in this study were the result of a lack of information or misinformation about the Quiet Hour's purpose, its rules and regulations, and/or the skills required to use the time effectively.

Quiet Hour training is an educational program and must be required for everyone who will be affected by the policy, not just managers and executives. All employees involved need a common understanding of the Quiet Hour's purpose; they need to know what Quiet Hour practice requires of them as a member of the group and they need to learn new Time Management skills so that as individuals they can make the best possible use of that hour.

4.) Use Success

Success is a powerful force which can create a momentum of its own. Given adequate exposure, successful Quiet Hour practice will spread and the Quiet Hour will be perceived, not as an imposition, but as a gift.

A Quiet Hour Implementation Strategy

The principles above find their usefulness as they help to shape the framework for a first Quiet Hour implementation strategy which is offered below. This strategy sets up a procedure which addresses the issues of training, allows time for the potential users to come to a common understanding of what the policy is for and how it should be used, and prepares people who will be affected by the adoption of the policy. This proposed strategy promotes the Quiet Hour concept by emphasizing its value as a time-saving, stress-reducing tool. It builds on what must be an already existing desire for quiet time on the part of some managers and supervisors, and it trusts that successful practice in one area of the company, adequately communicated to other employees, will motivate adoption and improved practice company-wide.

This implementation strategy is a two-phase operation. The first phase is a voluntary phase and consists of three steps. During this phase, which might take as long as a year to

implement, interested groups within the company elect the Quiet Hour training and begin to practice the policy. This phase assumes that there are employees within the company who will be easily persuaded of the Quiet Hour's value and will readily take advantage of the opportunity. This first phase establishes training procedures and helps those voluntary groups through the sometimes clumsy early stages of Quiet Hour implementation. It assumes that at least one group will be successful and uses that success to further promote the Quiet Hour policy. This first phase attempts to encourage use of the Quiet Hour by highlighting its attractiveness and providing technical assistance.

The second phase is a mandatory phase and pulls into practice all those who have not made the commitment voluntarily. This phase must address any difficulties that arise from departments and individuals who prefer to be exempt from practice. Both phases are discussed in greater detail below.

Phase One: Voluntary Compliance (Three Steps)

1.) Announce the Plan and Promote the Quiet Hour Among Management

This strategy suggests that the highest ranking officers of the organization first announce to all levels of management the company's intention to eventually institute the Quiet Hour and offer an explanation of the two-phase strategy. Upper management would subsequently educate middle managers and supervisors about

the Quiet Hour and encourage them to support its use among their subordinates.

This first step is suggested by the data of this study that indicate that managers play a key role in Quiet Hour implementation. It has been determined that they alone can make or break Quiet Hour practice in their department. Because they play such a critical role, it is important to win them over first.

It is believed that a promotion effort among management would not be such a difficult task. This group of employees, who are quick to complain about the frequency of daily interruptions, (Copeman, Luijik, and de P. Hanika, 1963; Stewart, 1967; Carlson, 1979; Weber, 1980) have probably already heard of the idea. The literature suggests it often and the mention of the Quiet Hour has become a rather standard piece of Time Management training. Many managers already take a private Quiet Hour in the early morning hours when they are alone in the office. The Quiet Hour is probably less new to them than to others in the organization.

It may be necessary to convince the managers that universal quiet can be accomplished among a group of people in the context of the busy work day. It is suspected that managers would have reservations, not so much about the desirability of the Quiet Hour, but about the feasibility of its practical application. It is suggested that this promotion effort among managers address

that issue carefully. Quiet Hour literature may serve that purpose; Mackenzie and Lekan's article (1977) may offer some support. It may also help for managers to be exposed to the stories of the successful 25-year old Quiet Hour in the midwest insurance company.

2.) Train Volunteer Groups, Managers and All

This study suggests that training is a critical part of the implementation process. Prospective practitioners need information and skill building that will guide them into the policy. They need Time Management skills that enable them to make the most of the hour. This aspect of training might include instruction on how to plan and prioritize a day's work; use of a TO DO List would be an important lesson also. Trainees might also learn to lengthen their span of concentration as well as learn how to organize and save work that makes maximum use of the undisturbedhour. Trainees also need some psychological preparation that specifically addresses issues of unavailability. Trainees should be helped to clarify their job responsibilities and to gain an understanding of the way in which one can cooperate with others and yet maintain some time in sustained silence.

Training should furthermore help employees to work out the intricacies of every day life with the Quiet Hour policy. Prospective practitioners need to know how to live with the Quiet Hour as it is affected by particular situations in every

day work life. They need to know the limits of the rules and regulations. "When is a violation not a violation?" and "How do I tell my friend at the next desk that I'd rather be doing my work than chatting with her?" are questions that might need to be addressed.

Training should also address the Quiet Hour preparation effort. Groups will need to know how to inform those people inside and outside the company about their forthcoming policy in an effort to reduce the inconvenience that is about to be imposed.

Managers may need some special training. It is important that they be impressed with their "role modeling" responsibilities. They may also need some guidelines for violations and they may need help finding methods of reprimand that are compatible with their own personal management style.

A Quiet Hour pilot project is recommended. Training sessions would then be used as a forum to discuss any difficlties that become apparent in daily practice.

3.) Promote Successful Effort

Once the Quiet Hour is being practiced successfully among any of the trained groups, this study recommends that the success story be made public. A top executive might make a public statement or the public information office might put an article in the local newspaper. Certainly the company newsletter should write up the story. The purpose would be to keep the idea in the

forefront of employees' minds and to present the Quiet Hour as a desirable thing. It is hoped that other groups would be attracted to the idea and seek the training for themselves.

Phase Two: Mandatory Compliance

Assuming that not all departments voluntarily adopted the Quiet Hour policy during Phase One, the final step in this proposed strategy would be mandatory implementation. All remaining units and individuals would be instructed to take the training and begin Quiet Hour practice. As stated in the beginning of the Phase One discussion, it is considered important that everyone know from the beginning that mandatory implementation will eventually come to pass.

A mandatory Quiet Hour policy does not presume that everyone will use the time equally well. Instead it presumes that variations in job responsibilities (an issue to be addressed more clearly with "Future Research"), and differences in personal work styles, will play a role. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, one basic principle that supports this strategy is that everyone can refrain from interaction for one hour of the day.

A critical aspect of Phase Two may be the handling of exceptions. Some departments, it is imagined, will plea to be exempt or ask that some rules be modified for their particular circumstances. Such situations, it is recommended, should be handled on a case-be-case basis and that exemptions be granted only after careful study.

Once the policy is mandatory, the company-wide Quiet Hour is in a powerful position. When new employees are hired, they should be helped to see that Quiet Hour practice is expected of them. With no choice in the matter, they come into employment knowing that adjustment to the Quiet Hour is their responsibility. According to one employee at the large company where the Quiet Hour had been practiced successfully for 25 years, it was sometimes difficult for new employees to get used to the hour of quiet. This company claimed, however, that they had never had a new employee fail to make the adjustment.

Suggested Future Research

What Do Quiet Hour Users Do?

As mentioned earlier, this study originally intended to pay greater attention to how Quiet Hour users used the hour itself. At one point, early in the investigation, this study hoped to discover what people did with the hour and to determine whether Time Management skills were, in fact, being used. It was hoped that Quiet Hour users, past and present, could supply data that would ascertain the degree to which the Quiet Hour activities effected productivity and the work process throughout the remainder of the work day. It was expected that data relevant to this concern would have strong implications for training

procedures.

The purpose of the Quiet Hour is more than just a relief from the interaction that otherwise dominates the day, although that is of some value. The purpose of the Quiet Hour is to get people to prioritize tasks and plan the day or to work on tasks that are particularly benefited by sustained concentration. As mentioned earlier, most Quiet Hour users that were interviewed in this study reported that they did not work differently during the Quiet Hour than they would have worked during any other hour of the day. The only way in which the Quiet Hour was different for them was the reduction of conversation and movement. If the ultimate outcome of a successful Quiet Hour implementation is to improve the quality and quantity of work, and if these interviewees' answers were accurate accounts of their time use, employees would do well to adopt Time Management skills and use the Quiet Hour to its fullest potential.

In the absence of Time Logs, data on how people used the time of the Quiet Hour simply were not available. Although almost all interviewees were asked at least once about how they used the hour, little more than vague responses were offered. It is recommended, therefore, that that piece of work not get left undone. This researcher suggests that a careful study utilizing Time Logs be conducted in the interest of developing appropriate Quiet Hour training strategies and better equipping Quiet Hour users to make maximum, rather than incidental, use of the gift of

uninterrupted time.

Variations on the Quiet Hour Theme

A second interesting area that deserves further investigation has to do with the "Quiet Hour variations" that exist in the work world today.

As mentioned earlier during the course of this study, this researcher discovered some organizational policies that were adaptations on the literature's version of the Quiet Hour, tailored to suit the organization or group's particular needs. These "Quiet Hour variations" were similar to the Quiet Hour in purpose but were different in practice. The example of one company's "Phone-free days" makes the point. (See Chapter IV.)

The focus of future research along these lines would be to determine what other Quiet Hour variations exist in the workplace today. This researcher would hope to discover policies that were based on the idea of the Quiet Hour but were adjusted to the particular company's (or department's) needs and philosophic orientation. A survey of these Quiet Hour variations would serve as models for other companies who like the idea but find the basic Quiet Hour mode inapproprite for their particular situation.

One Recommendation

The Quiet Hour seems to be suffering from an image problem brought on mostly by its name. "Quiet Hour" carries implications that are not in line with the intended use of the time and in the minds of many people, the term conjures up images of children being told to be quiet. Quiet implies inactivity, the absence of noise, or a state of passivity. It says little about planning and concentrated effort and demands less respect than it deserves.

This researcher recommends that the name be changed to something more consistent with the Quiet Hour's purpose and level of sophistication. A name that indicates what activity is intended for the time would help its image, it is supposed, and would give its users a stronger message about what is expected. "Planning Hour," for example, would be an improvement, although that too seems less than ideal. Perhaps at some point in the future a name will be found.

Conclusion

The Quiet Hour is a simple concept. It is an organizational policy that mandates an hour of quiet every day. As a policy, it provides the context in which individuals can

work undisturbed. Through its rules and regulations regarding personal interaction, it creates an environment that individuals could not create for themselves at work during the normal work day. In theory, the Quiet Hour policy is simple in nature and easy to understand.

The implementation process, however, is a different matter. Getting a large group of people to accept an idea that challenges social norms and requires self-discipline is difficult in itself. Getting many individuals to do it in a similar manner and at the same time makes the task more formidable yet. While the concept of the Quiet Hour is simple and straightforward, the concepts involved in implementation are not.

This study has indicated that interest in the Quiet Hour as an antidote to the problems of workplace frenzy does exits. It has further indicated that the many well-intentioned implementors find the policy problematic. This study has pointed to several areas of Quiet Hour implementation and use that should be addressed if a Quiet Hour policy is to improve its chances of survivial. One overriding assertion that emerged from this study is that the implementation process, with a large group especially, is benefited by a careful implementation strategy. The institution of a Quiet Hour policy is underestimated by a seat-of-the-pants procedure, however greatly inspired. It requires time for preparation and training and must address the inevitable misunderstandings that will arise with employees who

feel imposed upon.

It must be assumed for the time being, that most employees will not know instinctively what to do in order to make the most of the hour of quiet. Any implementation strategy should suppose that people need skills for planning and effective time usage.

This study has furthermore suggested the feasibility of pocket Quiet Hours which should be encouraging information for employees who like the policy but are unable to convince the remainder of the company to adopt it.

This study has shed some light on the implementation process. Believing that the Quiet Hour concept is a viable one and should be available to organizations and groups that find it valuable and want to adopt it, this study has made its effort so that Quiet Hour policies might be implemented with greater degrees of success.

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APPENDIX A

QUIET HOURS AT PAUL REVERE: A REPORT ON THE FINDINGS AND A FEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The following report has been generated from on-site observations and interviews conducted by Lynn Kirk, University of Massachusetts, with employees at the Paul Revere Insurance Company, Worcester, Ma. on March 6 and 7 and May 8, 1985. A total of 42 different employees, representing 15 different departments or units within the company, were interviewed both individually and in small groups. Interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes. Many were conducted at the employee's desk in their work environment. All interviews were tape recorded (with the interviewee's permission) and transcribed. Observations occurred as the researcher twice toured the building during the morning Quiet Hour and before, during and after the interview sessions that took place in the interviewee's work environment.

The following report is a four part discussion on Quiet Hours as they are currently practiced at Paul Revere. This report consists of: I.) some general comments, II.) an assessment of the degree to which the entire company complies with the Quiet Hour policy, III.) the identification of some specific difficulties that impinge on the effectiveness of Quiet Hour's, and IV.) five recommendations in the interest of an

improved Quiet Hour policy.

General Comments

"Quiet Hours" are generally "in place" at Paul Revere. All company personnel with whom I spoke were aware that Quiet Hour's were a company policy; they had some sense of who did and didn't practice Quiet Hour's within the company; and they knew where they, individually and collectively within their unit or department, stood with Quiet Hour practice. It was something that most employees had given some thought to, even if they decided that didn't like it and/or not to do it. Scattered throughout the company are pockets of exemplary Quiet Hour practitioners and there seems to be a significant number of individuals who are Quiet Hour advocates.

Company Compliance

The degree of company-wide compliance varies greatly at Paul Revere. The worst offenders are those who talk, move about, and make calls freely within their own unit, but hesitate to (although sometimes do) call or go outside their unit. Conversation and activity are a mix of work-related and social

chat although there is more of the former than the later.

The best Quiet Hour practitioners, on the other hand, limit their talking to infrequent and brief whispers about work only. They call outside their department rarely and usually precede the call with an apology for calling during Quiet Hour's. Would-be intruders (either by phone or in person) are told nicely that "This is Quiet Hours." Supervisors in units where Quiet Hour's are practiced request specifically that their staff hold their questions until after Quiet Hour's have ended. Meetings are sometimes called during Quiet Hour's, but that happens infrequently and only after careful consideration. When someone within the unit forgets and talks, they usually receive a few "glances" or a gentle reprove from a supervisor. All units represented by the interviewees fell somewhere between these two extremes.

In general, it seems there is an understanding among all company employees that one does not disturb someone in another unit, but that internal compliance within the unit is a decision made (consciously or unconsciously) within that unit.

There is mixed opinion about whether uneven compliance is a problem within the company. There are those who believe that things are OK as they are: in units where Quiet Hour is desired, it is practiced; in units where it is not, it is not practiced. A majority, however, believe that more uniform compliance throughout the company would be of benefit. This opinion is NOT

restricted to those employees in units where Quiet Hour's are practiced well; employees in units where Quiet Hours are not practiced expressed a strong desire for more uniform compliance also.

The reasons cited in favor of uniform compliance are: 1. if everybody practiced the Quiet Hour similarly, there would be even fewer interruptions from inside the company, and 2. if the company policy were stronger, there would be less need to personally "reprimand" a violator, a position that many people expressed discomfort with.

The desire for greater compliance throughout the company was expressed by employees on all levels of the organizational heirarchy. The one situation which evokes the greatest compassion, however, is that of the clerical-type worker who likes the Quiet Hour but cannot practice it because her supervisor won't. She and usually a few others in her unit know that they could work better with an hour of undisturbed time early in the morning but they cannot do that in a context of conversation and activity. These employees need the stronger company policy to work more effectively.

Specific Difficulties

1.) Misunderstanding the intention

One of the greatest inhibitors to a more effective Quiet Hour policy at Paul Revere is the employees' misunderstanding about the motives behind its implementation. The introduction of Quiet Hour's in conjunction with Flex Hours seems to have created a false impression and is a significant problem. Many employees believe that the sole purpose of the Quiet Hour is to reduce the disturbance that would be created by people's coming and going on different shifts. This impression not only displaces the true purpose of the Quiet Hour's, but provides employees who do not mind the "disturbance" with a rationale for non-compliance.

Another misunderstanding that exists among employees is the belief that management instituted the Quiet Hour's so that people would not socialize; some employees feel that PR is "cracking the whip," so to speak. This attitude is not prevalent, but it is present.

2.) A limited understanding of its purpose

Even those who did not mis<u>understand</u> what the Quiet Hour's purpose was, often did not appreciate its full potential as a Time Management tool. Very few people seem to have understood that it has usefulness beyond being merely an hour of quiet. Most interviewees presumed that <u>what</u> they did during that hour

was to be no different from what they would do with any other hour of the day -- the only difference was that that during that hour, their attention would not be diverted. (This is not necessarily a wrong idea; it is merely limited.) Only a handful of people understood that the hour might be used to prioritize the day's tasks and plan the day's activities. Only one interviewee understood the principle of "saving" work that demands concentration for the Quiet Hour and no one mentioned the habit of gathering information and materials prior to the Quiet Hour in order to use it more effectively.

3.) Insufficient commitment of supervisors, managers and executives

The single most important factor bearing on any Quiet Hour policy is the demonstrated commitment of the people who exercise the greatest influence in the company. Employees watch their bosses and are not at all likely to discipline themselves more than their bosses discipline themselves. For that reason, more supervisors, managers, and executives at Paul Revere must practice the Quiet Hour in exemplary fashion if the policy is to thrive and be effective.

Two particular difficulties in this area currently exist. One is the practice of bosses regularly calling subordinates on the phone or insisting on meetings during the Quiet Hour's. Such a practice takes unfair advantage of the "captive" employee and,

while it serves the immediate needs of the boss, undermines the longer-term productivity of the subordinate.

A second problem is the absence of a Quiet Hour endorsement from president Aubrey Reid. Employees at Paul Revere are aware that their top executive has not made a public statement in favor of Quiet Hour practice. One employee pointed out that, in fact, Mr. Reid's endorsement of Flex Hours brought into relief the absence of a similar statement regarding the Quiet Hour's. This employee made subsequent conclusions about what the president considered important and unimportant. This same employee, perhaps coincidentally, does not practice Quiet Hour's.

4.) Confusion about inacessibility

Another area of difficulty that effects individual use of the Quiet Hour, and in turn, company compliance, is confusion about the "rightness" of making oneself inaccessible for an hour of the day. Many non-practitioners believe that they do not have the right to cut their services off from others for an hour. They believe that the serivce that they provide to the company is too critical and that to deny that service to their colleagues would hinder productivity.

Other non-practitioners believe that they cannot be productive unless they are free to ask questions and consult with co-workers all day. They believe that even an hour of restricted freedom interferes with getting the work done.

Other non-practitioners, supervisors in particular, are

confused about exceptions and emergencies and seem to deny themselves the right to make situation-specific decisions. These employees believe that Quiet Hour's are problematic because an emergency might come up. One supervisor commented that she didn't like Quiet Hour's because the (computer) system might go down and then she wouldn't be able to call anybody in the company to get information.

This difficulty is perhaps best understood as it stands in contrast to the comments of better Quiet Hour practitioners who understand the principles of relative benefit and are not afraid to make situation-specific decisions about Quiet Hour "violations." These practitioners understand that from a broader perspective, the gains made from working without interruption outweigh whatever consequences there are from depriving co-workers of their serivces for an hour. These employees understand that exceptions will inevitably be warranted from time to time and that emergencies, once in a great while, naturally override a daily policy.

5.) Noise near the elevators

It was mentioned on several occasions that a department's proximity to the elvators made Quiet Hour practice difficult. People standing at the elevators waiting to board talk, sometimes quiet loudly, and the noise carries into the nearby work areas. Worse yet, it happens frequently that people deboarding the elevators continue their conversations as they walk off the

elevator and pass through one or more departments en route to their own work space. The clock-signs were created, in part, as a response to this problem.

6.) The afternoon Quiet Hour

While not necessarily a problem, the afternoon Quiet Hour is worthy of some consideration in this discussion. During interviews with the Paul Revere employees, it had to be made explicit if the subject were the afternoon Quiet Hour; all employees presumed that when the term Quiet Hour was used, the morning one was what was meant. For the most part, employees explained, this was due to the fact that so many people come to work at 7:15 and simply are not around in the afternoon when the later one is practiced.

Those employees who do work the later shifts, say one of two things: 1. that there is hardly a need for the afternnon Quiet Hour -- that there are so few people in the office, noise and interaction are at a minimum anyway, or 2. that the afternoon people spend a good deal of their would-be Quiet Hour covering the phones for people who have already gone home. These two perspectives appear to contradict one another and the difficulty seems to be situation specific from unit to unit. Under the Recommendations section of this report there is comment concerning the continuation of the afternoon Quiet Hour.

Recommendations

The Quiet Hour's at Paul Revere are relatively effective, although there is a need -- as expressed by the employees themselves -- for improvement. What follows are a few recommendations in that interest:

1.)"Fan the flames" of success. In company newsletters, in memos, on posted notices, or however, make mention - in a congratulatory tone - of suitations where the Quiet Hour is being practiced well and people's perceptions of its benefits can be quoted. In doing so, it is important not to overlook the "little" things - like the clock signs.

2.) Offer a training program to any department or unit that wants to practice the Quiet Hour better (or for the first time). The program should be several sessions long with a mechanism for continued feedback. I suggest that the department be trained all together for some of the sessions but that managers and supervisors have some sessions by themselves. The training program should emphasize Time Management skills such as using TO DO lists, saving work that requires concentration for that hour, and gathering information and materials before the Quiet Hour starts. One significant portion of the training should address the employees' understanding of the Quiet Hour's

rules, its exceptions and what kind of emergencies override the Quiet Hour policy. The unit should also be encouraged to develop its own mechanisms for periodic reinforcement and ways of remembering on a daily basis.

3.) It is important to gain a public statement from Aubrey Reid stating that the Quiet Hour is valuable and that its use is encouraged. He should make mention of its Time Management value and not mention its connection to Flex Time.

4.) I suggest that you reconsider the continuation of the afternoon Quiet Hour. It doesn't serve the employees very well and it weakens the concept of the Quiet Hour somewhat. Its continuation is a question; I have no strong inclinations in either direction.

5.) Eventually, if it is still needed, put up signs near the elevators, reminding people of the Quiet Hour and encouaging people to be aware that nearby people are working.

APPENDIX B

NUMBERS AND KINDS OF INTERVIEWEES BY ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATION	Current or Former user of the Quiet Hour	No. of top executives, including presidents	No. of upper managers	No. of middle managers	No. of supervisors	No. of executive secretaries	No. of staff	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES
ORGANIZATION A	C	3	3	7	5		28	46
ORGANIZATION B	F		1				1	2
ORGANIZATION C	C		1					1
ORGANIZATION D (Two Divisions)	F/C	2		1		1		4
ORGANIZATION E	C		1				1	2
ORGANIZATION F	F	1				1		2
TOTALS		6	6	8	5	2	30	57

APPENDIX C

KINDS OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATION	Memos to Personnel	Articles in the company newsletter	Newspaper clippings	Pages from the employees' manual	Report on Flex Time and Quiet Hour	In-coming correspondence regarding Quiet Hour
ORGANIZATION A	10 pp.	1 art.	2 arts.	1 p.	25 pp.	
ORGANIZATION E			4 arts.	1 p.		2 letters